

THE  
CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

AUGUST, 1824.

Religious Communications.

LECTURES ON THE SHORTER CATECHISM OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES—ADDRESSED TO YOUTH.

LECTURE IX.

Without any recapitulation of what was said in the last lecture, on the Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Godhead, I proceed immediately to show—

II. That there are a number of passages of scripture which plainly represent, sometimes a plurality, and sometimes a Trinity of persons, in the one, only, living and true God.

Here, as in the former lecture, I can by no means introduce all the passages that bear on the point in discussion, but only select a few, out of a considerable number. And I shall begin with remarking—notwithstanding the sneers with which I know the remark has been treated—that one of the names of the true God, אֱלֹהִים (ALEIM, or ELOHIM) which is very frequently used in the Old Testament, is in the plural number. Some of the best and most erudite biblical and oriental scholars, have been clearly of the opinion, that the frequent use of this term, to denote the true God, does intimate, and was intended to intimate, that there is a plurality in the Godhead.\* It is, no doubt, true,

that this word is occasionally used to denote inferior beings, and even

*Aleim*, have lately affected to look down on the opinions of their opponents as the tenets only of ignorance or weakness. Yet Bishop HORSLEY, whose erudition and intellectual vigour he who questions will only implicate his own, is among those who maintain that a plurality in the Godhead is clearly intimated in this word. In "A Critical Disquisition on the Etymology and Import of the Divine Names, *Eloah*, *Elohim*, *El*, *Jehovah*, and *Jah*," he says, "that whatever may be the etymology of these two words (*Eloah* and *Elohim*—written without points *Alue* and *Aleim*) and whatever the true interpretation of either, it cannot be, without some reason,—it cannot be, as some have pretended from the mere caprice of language,—that the plural word is much oftener used in the scriptures as a name of God, than the singular. That the plural word is used with the design of intimating a plurality in the Godhead, in some respect or other, it is strange that any one should doubt, who has observed that it is used in places, in which, if there be in truth no plurality in the Godhead, the inspired writers must have been determined, by the principles of their religion, studiously to avoid the use of a plural; especially as they had singulars at command. The plural is used in that very precept, which prohibits the worship of any God but one. 'I *Jehovah* am thy *Gods*, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.' 'Be not unto thee, other *Gods* beside me;' and in every subsequent part of the decalogue, where God is mentioned, the plural word is introduced. In the second commandment, 'For I *Jehovah* am thy *Gods*.' In the third, 'Take not the name of *Jehovah* thy *Gods* in vain.' In the fourth, 'the Sabbath of *Jehovah* thy *Gods*.' In the fifth, 'The land which *Jehovah* thy *Gods* is giving thee.' Whoever will

\* Those who deny that any plurality of persons is intimated in the Hebrew word  
VOL. II.—Ch. Adv.

I deserved the stroke, and even more, if any thing could have wounded me more sensibly. Wealth, independence, honour and distinctions, were all within my grasp. Worldly prosperity was flowing in upon me. Blessed with a partner whose good sense and sprightliness enlivened domestic society, and whose elegant taste qualified her for sharing with me the gifts of fortune with dignity and grace, I was tempted to feel myself happy, independent of religion. In a moment my towering schemes of sublunary bliss are tumbled to the dust. Thus do they deserve to suffer, who place their happiness in any thing distinct from the supreme good. May my affections be recalled, and fixed on their proper object—never to wander any more!

My dear little infant lives, and enjoys good health. But so uncertain are all human comforts, that I dare not allow myself to build any expectations, even on this promising source of enjoyment. It gives me pleasure to think, that in every event which may befall him, he was devoted to God in the solemn ordinance of baptism, by one of the last acts of his pious mother. "The promise is to you and to your seed after you." I cannot but hope, that one so solemnly devoted to God by an expiring parent, "who had remembered her Creator in the days of her youth," will be blessed of Heaven. Grant, merciful Father! that he may live—not to dishonour the God of his mother, but to promote the cause of religion, the glory of his Maker, and the happiness of his fellow creatures— \* \*

I am, &c.

DAVID RAMSAY.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

GLEANINGS AND HINTS TOWARDS AN ARGUMENT FOR THE AUTHENTICITY OF JOHN V. 7.

"There are three that bear record in Vol. II.—*Ch. Adv.*

heaven—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

"We are unspeakably ashamed that any modern divines should have fought, *pedibus et unguibus*, for the retention of a passage so indisputably spurious."

*Eclectic Review.*

I take this up *purely* as a subject of criticism. The decisions which may be made by the critic on this verse, will assuredly not affect an article of doctrine. The characters, and faith of the respectable critics who have arranged themselves against this verse, will clearly indicate this.

The most strenuous opposers of the authenticity of the verse are, generally speaking, as decided in their faith in the most holy Trinity, and in the divinity of our Lord, as those are who advocate its authenticity. "There are,"—says Griesbach, one of the ablest opponents of this verse,—"there are so many arguments for the true Deity of Christ, that I see not how it can be called in question." See his Pref. vol. ii. First Crit. Edit. of the Greek Test.

And, indeed, such is the extent and force of the evidence of the Trinity, that were this verse relinquished and expunged, it would remain *unshaken* in all its beauty and vigour. For instance, nothing can be more clear than the scriptural evidence that there is one God. And nothing can be more clear than this, that the Father sent the Son; and that, therefore, the Father and the Son are distinct: that the Father and the Son sent the Holy Ghost: and that, therefore, the Father, and the Son, and Holy Ghost are distinct persons: that each of these distinct persons is *called* God: and being *called* God, in the language of inspiration, each of them is the *one* God.

That this is true of the Father, no one has yet expressed a doubt. He is true God: "*The only true*

God.\* But the Socinian quibble has no foundation here. It is not said, as they charge the text with saying, *he only* is the true God. But he is *the only true God*. For there is *only one God*.

Nor should the least doubt be expressed relative to the Son and the Holy Spirit, when we have these decisive texts. "The Word was God." "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."† To "lie unto the Holy Ghost is to lie unto God." And the same One who is the "Jehovah" of the inspired Isaiah, is the Holy Ghost of the Inspired Paul. (Compare Is. v. 8 and 9, with Acts xxviii. 25.) So evidently is it taught that each of these persons is the one God. And this unity and trinity is distinctly recognised in 1 Cor. xii. 4—12. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit: there are diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord: there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh in all." No human intellect could devise language more plain to express this fact held out, that the *distinct persons, the Spirit and the Lord, are the same one God*.

And I would solicit my reader's attention to this fact. *There is no more difficulty in the phrase, "these three are one," than there is in another phrase, in a verse which no man has had the hardihood to challenge, "I and my father are one,"—or, I and my Father, we are one; ἵνα καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἴν ἱσμεν.*—If it be proper, at all, to use the word *difficulty* on such a subject, we must say that it is just as difficult to comprehend how two distinct persons (distinct in one sense) can be one in another sense, as it is to conceive three distinct persons to be one. And it is certain that there is no more mystery—no, nor any thing more *objectionable*, in *three distinct persons being one* in essence, than there can be in *two being one!*

We arrive now at this conclusion, that there is nothing more in the verse under discussion, to excite prejudice, than is to be found in other authentic passages of God's book.—Nay, it is worthy of our devout attention and serious consideration, that that which is compressed in 1 John v. 7, "there are three," &c. is contained in John's gospel—with this difference, that it is spread out at great length. The following contrast will show this.

1. "The Father bears record in heaven." Compare with this John v. 37, &c. "The Father himself hath borne witness of me."
2. "The Word beareth witness in heaven." Compare with this John viii. 14. 18. "I bear record of myself—my record is true." "I am one who beareth witness of myself."
3. "The Holy Ghost beareth record in heaven." Compare with this John xv. 26, "The Comforter—the Spirit—he shall testify of me."—And in reference to the last clause of our verse, Christ says, "*I and the Father are one.*"—Not *ἓς*—*unus*; but *ἓς—ἓς θεῶν*, one Deity—one substance: or in the words of Paul, "the same God."\*

The very learned men who have pronounced this text spurious, must have done it—every one anticipates—on the strength of the most complete argument, both as to matter and form—else being all of them *very modest men*, they could not have permitted themselves to use such triumphant and boasting language, as that which I have set down in my motto, in proof of their excessive modesty. They have pronounced our verse spurious on the weight of external evidence *exclusively*. And this *external evidence* has been deduced chiefly from Greek manuscripts.

And here permit me to say with all deference, that a serious difficulty must have met our modest

\* John xvii. 3.

† John i. 1—14.

\* 1 Cor. xii. 6. See Kettneri, Hist. Dicti Johannei, &amp;c. p. 149, 150.

opponents at the very threshold. The external evidence which they have produced is such, in our view, as ought to have been received with caution, and even jealousy. And I am only repeating what the most learned of our opponents have often said. I refer to Griesbach. He says—"The perfect critick is not he who can enumerate the codes, or distinguish the different revisions, corrections of the text, &c. But true critical acumen is chiefly required in weighing the *internal* marks of true, or false readings."\* And Wetstein has truly remarked, what must have struck every student of this controversy, "that so many things can be objected to the most ancient Greek and Latin codes (extant) which lessens the weight of their testimony, that scarcely any thing *certain* can be determined from them alone."† He means *critically*, of course, not *polemically*.

Now, if such a writer as Griesbach does offer, in the presence of his associates, such exceptions to *external evidence*, in its favourable form, I appeal to the learned, what we must say of *that form* of *external* evidence, on which our opponents have rested the *whole weight* of their argument against our text. We are now to examine this minutely.

*First.* The learned men have laid down this sweeping assertion: "*This verse is not found in a single Greek manuscript written before the 16th century.*"

This assertion has not only no argument to support it fairly—but, pardon me, it does bear on its front, as we shall show in the issue, the air of an absurdity! The manner in which the argument is conducted on the pages of Michaelis, and of Bishop Marsh, his translator, does fully show this. And the argument of the rest is the same. They find

a certain number of MSS.—they collate them; they find the verse only in 156\* of these MSS.—they find the most of these dubious, or interpolated, or mutilated. We have the most learned *assertions*. They condescend to admit *three* copies worthy of an argument; and again of these three, two are set aside; and one is made, in all its solitariness, to look extremely suspicious.

With respect to the Codex Guelpherbatanus, and, indeed, many of the rest, we are not disposed to advocate their antiquity—nor do we need to lay very great stress on them for our argument. We are willing also to lay not very much stress on even the Codex Montforlii, of the Dublin Univ. Library; though we do think that the learned men have by no means succeeded by their ingenious argument, in taking away its antiquity. It certainly must be referred to at least the 13th century; perhaps to an age long before this. Bishop Burgess, in our view, has the better of the argument. But I am not disposed to yield them the antiquity of the Codex Ravianus of Berlin. The argument of Griesbach, and the remarks of Papelbaum, which are supported by Dr. Marsh, do, it is true, exhibit all that *can* be said by most ingenious criticks. I feel their force. But the argument is, such on the other side, that I feel compelled to yield to it.—1. The character of Professor Ravius of Upsal, is entitled to the utmost respect. He brought it from the east: he believed it, and declared it to be an authentic and very ancient copy.—2. It is written in the *uncial* letters; and in their natural easy way; without any thing to indicate the hand of a *modern* forger of the *uncial letters*. And it is now ad-

\* Namely, 151 collated by Michaelis, Griesbach, &c., and since their time *five* more, first brought into England by Dr. Carlyle. See Horne's *Introd.* vol. iv. p. 436.

\* Symb. Crit. ii. p. 90.

† Prolog. ad. N. T. p. 296.

mitted by all scholars, that the Greeks ceased in the *ninth* century to write in the *uncial* letter.\*—3. It wants the accents—another mark of the great antiquity of the MS.—4. It is written on very ancient parchment. These were, in substance, the statements of the very learned Jablonsky, who, more than a hundred years ago, carefully examined the MS. with the eye of an able critick. And I will not yield his mode of examination to that of Griesbach, who pronounces dogmatically against it, after having said that he had, “*ex parte*,” compared it with the Complutensian copy.†

But without pursuing this subject further, or following them over their field of expatiating on MSS. let it be remarked, that were we even to grant all that they claim from their inferences from the collation of MSS. they have proved *nothing*. Nay, from the materials which they have, *they can prove nothing really in point*. Here are the proofs of this.—

It is admitted by the learned, that of all the Greek manuscripts, about 400 only have been collated.‡ Griesbach, who plays off his argument with the air of a critick, who felt that he had every material at command, had *actually no more than 355 MSS. to collate*.§ Michaelis and Marsh do indeed reckon up 469. But they do not say that they had collated all these. They had “*described 469 MSS.*”

But do these illustrious scholars mean to insinuate that there are no other MSS. in the world? Do their confidence and boasting demand our faith that they had left no manuscript uncollated? The fact is, that the number of MSS. collated, or even examined, bear a very small proportion to the rich treasures remaining to be examined. Bishop

Marsh tells us that Blanchini has, in his book, described many MSS. hitherto *unnoticed* in the editions of the New Testament; and *unnoticed*, or not collated by Marsh himself.\* The Paris Library has 80 MSS. of the Greek Testament: 65 Catenæ and 57 Lectiones, in all 202; and of all these only 49 have been collated.† The number in the Vatican Library, it is allowed by all the learned, is very great. And, indeed, such have been the facilities existing through so many centuries, to augment the collection, that the treasures of MSS. must be great and valuable. Burnet,‡ who had tried to explore this library, does indeed lament “that there are so few Greek MSS. in the Vatican Library of Rome.” But it is presumed that the learned traveller was induced to think so, from his having experienced the same difficulties which have invariably prevented others before him, and after him, from pursuing their researches. The jealousy combined with the ignorance and bigotry of its masters, prevents the learned from having any access to its treasures of MSS. Out of all these treasures, only 34 copies have been collated.

In fine, not to mention numerous other public and private libraries; in the grand Ducal Library at Florence alone, *there are, at least, 1000 Greek MSS. of the New Testament!* And of these only 24 have been collated!§

But this is not all: few, very few, of the most ancient Greek MSS. now exist. Let the scholar only recollect the historical detail of the ravages made on them by the flames; and by the hands of tyranny. In the persecution of Diocletian, before the Nicene Council, the MSS. of the scriptures were sought with the ut-

\* See Kettnerus, p. 205.

† Kettnerus, p. 206 and 210.

‡ Horne's Introd. iv. p. 437.

§ Prolog. in Tom. i. ci.—cxxvi. and Horne iv. p. 437, note.

\* Marsh's Michaelis, vol. ii. p. 649.

† Horne iv. 437.

‡ In his Itinerarium p. 141. and Kettnerus, p. 207.

§ Horne, vol. iv. p. 437.

most diligence by the bloodhounds of persecution. "And many thousands of the best volumes of the scriptures, were, throughout the Roman empire, in the east, and in the west, consumed in the flames."\* At Rome, Alaric, the king of the Vandals, destroyed the libraries and their precious MSS. In the great fire at Constantinople in the year 476, there perished in the flames 120,000 valuable manuscripts. Among these were all the collections of Constantine the Great, and of Theodosius; and the most valuable MS. copies of holy scriptures, some of which were written by Theodosius's own hand.†

From these historical statements laid down, it appears that the number of the MSS. collated, bears a very small proportion to those which have perished; and those which still remain to be searched. They are as a few precious remains saved from the ruins of a vast city: a few valuable specimens gathered from a vast cabinet of curiosities. And yet from these few remains our learned antagonists gravely draw their dogmatical conclusion, that this verse under discussion, is not found in a single Greek MS. written before the 16th century!!

What would any scholar—what would any schoolboy, think, of that chemist who, having made a few and profound dissertations on a small and extremely defective collection of metals, and having accompanied his dissertations with a few unsatisfactory experiments—would very gravely conclude, in the presence of his audience, that all the other metals would, without exception, give forth the same results? What should we say of the geologist, who after having examin-

ed the position and ingredients of a few imperfect and ill defined strata, would thence reason on the whole strata of the globe—and dogmatically pronounce on the position and strata which he had never seen—and concerning which he had not collected a single fact? What should we say of a judge who, after having examined a few of the witnesses at his bar—and these of a very suspicious character—would glance his eye over the host remaining, and gravely pronounce his judgment, that because these few have testified to a certain point, therefore neither those within doors, nor those known to be out of doors, can, or will, or do testify to any other point different from this?

Not a whit better is the form of our learned opponents' argument. It is absurd, by the rules of philosophy and reason: it would be admitted in no court of justice—if common sense presided on the bench. It is rotten to the core. The learned men do admit the existence of these MSS. They do admit that a small, a very small number of them has been examined and collated. And yet they have wantonly drawn the conclusion imposed on us. It is sincerely to be hoped, that in order that no more discredit may be brought on criticism and learning—that they may no more expose themselves to the ridicule of our tyros—that they will give up the whole argument as wholly and utterly irrelevant. Confusion and defeat must necessarily fall on every such attempt to *prove such a negative!* We can draw no conclusion from the data of Griesbach, Michaelis, and Marsh. Were it known satisfactorily that no other MSS. do exist—were it proved in such a manner as every premise ought to be proved—that they had *all* perished by the hands of Dioclesian and Alaric, and the flames of Constantinople—then there might be some plausibility in the present form of the argument. But when

\* Kettnerus, p. 176. However some ancient and valuable MSS. in Africa, escaped in A.D. 303, by the *pious fraud* of Bishop Mensurius, of Carthage. Kettnerus, p. 161.

† Spanhem. Hist. Eucles. p. 145. And Kettnerus, p. 107.

the learned do know that so many hundreds—nay thousands of MSS. of the Greek Testament do exist, and have not yet been under the eye of the critick, it is to be hoped that every scholar, who really would not be willing to expose the science of criticism to the laughter of the illiterate, will withdraw this whole form of argument, until every known Greek MS. shall be collated—and then after that is done, let them learn in modest silence, that there is a probability that thousands more may be discovered by the indefatigable industry of the learned!\*

Mr. Editor—I now bring to a close this my first number. It is hoped that the first part of their external evidence is entirely destroyed. We shall examine the remaining portion of their argument in our next.

I am, Mr. Editor,  
Yours with esteem and affection,  
W. C. BROWNLEE.

*Basking Ridge, July 21, 1824.*

FOR THE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

Just as the preceding article was going to the press we received the Christian Observer for May last, in which we find some recent testimonies for the authenticity of the text for which our correspondent contends—we shall therefore copy it for our readers.

*To the Editor of the Christian Observer.*

It seems to be very widely taken for granted, that almost every well-

\* The historian Gibbon, as well as many of our modern journalists, exhibit a ludicrous and self-important assumption of power to teach others before they themselves have learned. Gibbon, in his *Rome*, vol. iv. p. 407, tells us with a flourish, that this memorable text of John was condemned by the universal silence of the orthodox fathers, ancient versions, and authentick MSS. He then adds, from the depth of his theological researches, that all the MSS. now extant, are above four score in number!! And he had not examined the Greek fathers; nor all the Latin fathers!

read biblical scholar has at length discarded from his copy of the New Testament the celebrated verse, 1 John, v. 7. This, however, is by no means the fact. The testimony of the learned Bishop of St. David's has already been several times referred to in your pages. "I can say with truth," says his lordship, "that every renewed examination of the subject has added to my convictions of its authenticity." Mr. Nolan, in his profound and interesting "Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate," after stating the internal and external evidence of the verse, and his reasons for thinking that the verse was suppressed by Eusebius in the *edition* (if it may be so called) which Mr. Nolan supposes him to have revised under the sanction of Constantine the Great, adds, "I trust nothing further can be wanting, to convince any ingenuous mind that 1 John v. 7. really proceeded from St. John the Evangelist." Dr. Hales, in his learned work on "Faith in the Holy Trinity," speaks with equal confidence of the authenticity of the verse. "To the authority of Griesbach on this question," he says, "I shall not hesitate to oppose and prefer the authority of a celebrated German editor and critick, the learned Ernesti; with whose observations I shall close this minute and elaborate survey of the whole external and internal evidence; which, I humbly trust, will be found exhaustive of the subject, and set the controversy at rest in future." Mr. Grier, in his recent "Reply to Dr. Milner's End of Religious Controversy," after noticing "the invincible arguments" of Mr. Nolan, says, "I feel compelled to abandon my former prejudices against the verse, and to think that a person should almost as soon doubt the genuineness of the rest of St. John's Epistle, as that of the disputed passage."

A late edition of the Greek Testament, by the Rev. Edward Valpy,