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THE DEITY OF CHRIST.



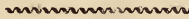
A

SERMON

DELIVERED JULY 31, 1810,

BEFORE THE HAVERHILL ASSOCIATION;

AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.



BY DANIEL DANA, A. M.

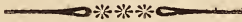
PASTOR OF A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NEWBURYPORT.



SECOND EDITION;—WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING SOME

THOUGHTS ON THE TRINITY.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present edition of this discourse appears at the suggestion of a large and respectable number of the author's parishioners and friends. Conscious that after the able discussion which the general subject has recently received, the discourse must have few attractions for most readers, he, at first, thought of attempting some material improvements, both in its plan and execution. But more mature reflection has determined him to commit it to the candor of the public, nearly in its original dress.

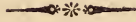
The "thoughts on the Trinity," which occupy the Appendix, are extracted, with some variations, from a discourse which he recently delivered on the subject. They are made public by request of the same gentlemen who subscribed for the republication of the sermon.

NEWBURYPORT,

Oct. 18, 1819.

HLR 30237

S E R M O N.



ROMANS, ix. 5.

—CHRIST....WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER.

THE subject which this passage brings to view, is most interesting. In the great business of religion, we have much, very much to do with Jesus Christ. We shall all soon appear before him, as our final Judge. To have some just knowledge of him, then, must be of infinite moment. If Christ be a creature, those who treat him as God, are chargeable with idolatry. This all allow. If he be God, are those who degrade him to the level of a mere creature, in no danger of impiety?—Let us, my brethren, feel the solemnity of the subject. Let us contemplate it with profoundest seriousness and humility. And may the *God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of himself, and of his dear Son!*

Our text asserts the DEITY of Christ, in terms as strong and unequivocal, as language could well afford. That the Savior is *man*, is generally admitted. And this the Apostle virtually declares in the context; for he represents him as descended, *according to the flesh*, from the Jewish nation. But, adds the Apostle, he has a nature infinitely superior to the human. He is "*over all, God blessed forever.*"—I am sensible, indeed, that certain critics have attempted to wrest from us this inspired attestation of the Savior's divinity, by giving a different translation of the original text. But in doing this, they have violated the

established rules of construction;* and their labors have recoiled on themselves. This passage, however, is far very far from standing alone. The doctrine it contains, is familiar to the word of God. Let us attentively consult this HOLY ORACLE, and obediently receive its unerring dictates.

What I propose, is,

I. Briefly to advert to some of the principal and most convincing proofs of the deity of Christ.

II. To refute some of the leading objections which have been raised against this doctrine.

III. To show that, considered in its aspects and connections, it is a doctrine of peculiar importance.

Without hesitation it may be affirmed, that no doctrine of the word of God is susceptible of fuller proof, than that of the Savior's deity. The evidence is even *superabundant*. Each argument which supports it, taken separately, is absolutely conclusive. And each receives additional light and force from a great variety of others. It might be distinctly shown, that the most sacred and appropriate *names* of Jehovah are, in scripture, frequently and familiarly applied to Jesus Christ. It might be shown, that the incommunicable *perfections*, and most stupendous *works* of Deity, are abundantly ascribed to him. It might be shown, that he is represented as the proper object of *religious homage*, and actually receives the worship, both of men and angels. It might be shown, that a great variety of passages in the old Testament, which by universal acknowledgment, refer to Jehovah, are, in the new, unreservedly applied to Jesus Christ.—These arguments are among the most common, and the most convincing. But I shall wave a particular illustration of them, and confine myself to a single idea. It is this: that the moment the deity of Christ is denied, the most *absurd* and *shocking*

* The method proposed, is, so to alter the pointing and translation of the passage, as that it shall stand thus: OF WHOM, AS CONCERNING THE FLESH, CHRIST CAME, WHO IS OVER ALL:—GOD BE BLESSED FOR EVER. To this it is objected, and on high critical authority, that in every *other* instance in which the expression, *blessed be God*, is found in the new Testament, the Greek *article* is used; and the *collocation* is likewise different from that in the present passage. Indeed, so palpably does the rendering suggested oppose the rules of legitimate criticism, that it is discarded by SocINUS himself. See Dr. MACKNIGHT'S remarks on the text.

consequences directly and inevitably follow. These consequences are various and almost endless; though but a small portion of them can be distinctly specified.

And *first*. If Christ be not God, it is impossible for the most accurate and discerning reader to understand the true meaning and scope of the bible. It will be readily admitted, that one of the first requisites in a revelation from heaven, is, that it be perspicuous and intelligible; especially on those great points which principally concern our faith, our worship, and our practice. If God be pleased to communicate himself to man, on subjects of everlasting moment, he will use a language which will not permit the honest and attentive enquirer to doubt of his real meaning. To suppose the contrary, would be to impeach at once the wisdom and benevolence of the Deity. In connexion with this remark, consider, my brethren, that it is a capital and uniform feature of the bible, that it asserts the character, and vindicates the claims, of the ONE LIVING AND TRUE GOD; while it proscribes with detestation every form of idolatry, and every approach to it. Consider, likewise, that another feature equally prominent, is, that it aims to bring the *highest possible honors* to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; to enthrone him in every heart; to cause every knee to bow to his sceptre, and every tongue to celebrate his praise. What is the necessary inference from these two important and undeniable facts?—It can be no other than this; that Jesus Christ is God.

If he be not God, how can he be vindicated (I speak it with trembling) from the charge of encouraging idolatry; since, on various occasions, he not only willingly received, but explicitly claimed, the highest honors which men could pay?—He constantly exhibited himself as the great object of *faith*; a faith which it would have been impious to repose in a creature. *For thus saith the LORD, Cursed be the man who trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.*—He demanded *supreme love*;—and what more than this, was ever claimed by Jehovah himself? He required his disciples to be willing to do, to venture, and to suffer every thing, *for his name's sake*—the very demand which, both in sub-

stance and form, is frequently made in the old Testament, by that God who has declared, that *he will not give his glory to another*.—He claimed a sovereignty over the sabbath. He claimed the church as his own. In a word, he represented himself as participating in the glory of his Father. *The Son of man*, said he, *shall come in the glory of his Father*.* What creature ever dared prefer such claims, or utter such language? Who could possibly do it, without impiety and blasphemy, but the coequal, coeternal Son of God?

If Christ be not God, the christian church is far less privileged than the church in ancient time. Then, good men put their trust in God, chose him as their felicity, consecrated themselves to his honor, and solaced themselves in his care, as their compassionate Shepherd, their all-sufficient Friend. What a sad falling away must it be, if this weighty charge, and these sacred honors, are devolved on a creature! How inferior the Christian, to the Jewish Church! But who knows not that the doctrine of the scripture is the exact reverse of this? Therefore Christ must be God.

If Christ be not God, the generality of the Christian world have been in a gross delusion to the present day. It is undeniable, that the great majority of Christian believers have viewed, honored, and depended on him, in this character. Is it probable, that the best men the world ever saw, should be permitted to fall into the direst and most destructive of errors? Was all their trust reposed in a *God who could not save*? Were all their consolations in life and death; were all their transporting hopes of complete bliss in their Savior's presence, the offspring of mere enthusiasm and delusion?

If Christ be not God, Christians need constantly be cautioned, not against loving and trusting him too little, but against loving and trusting him *too much*. To give him a *supreme* affection, must be downright idolatry. To confide in him with unlimited reliance, must be folly and madness. It must be subversive of piety, and ruinous to the soul. Grant that as a Friend and Benefactor, he claims their ten-

* See Dr. JAMIESON'S Vindication of the Scripture Doctrine, &c.

der and grateful affection, still, on the supposition made, this tribute must be altogether different both in kind and degree, from that which they are bound to render to the Deity. It must fall as much below it, as a creature falls below the infinite Creator. What strange and novel doctrine would this be! How repugnant to every principle of revelation! How grating, how insupportable to the feelings of every pious mind!

Finally; let it be considered, that the moment we deny the proper deity of Christ, we make the scriptures speak a language perfectly discordant and self-contradictory. We make them speak of a *created God*; of a *dependent* being, as the *Creator, Upholder, and Governor* of the universe; of an *eternal* being, who once *did not exist*; of a creature whom it is sin to worship, and perdition not to worship; “of infinite perfections, and yet all derived; of an omniscience which does not know all things, and an omnipotence which cannot do all things.”—My brethren, it must not, it cannot a moment be believed, that the book of God contains such gross inconsistencies and absurdities as these.—The consequence is, that Jesus Christ is truly and properly divine; **GOD OVER ALL, BLESSED FOR EVER.**

I am now in the **SECOND** place, to consider and refute some **OBJECTIONS** which have been raised against this doctrine. In doing this, I shall endeavor to select, not the weakest, but the principal and most plausible; those on which, so far as my information extends, their patrons have placed their chief reliance, for the support of their cause.

Suffer me, however, to premise one remark. If the doctrine under consideration be established by competent evidence, no contrary reasonings can be of great weight. There are a multitude of truths which we firmly believe, against which, however, a subtle disputant might easily produce objections which we could not satisfactorily obviate. This remark, while it applies to almost every subject within the compass of human thought, or observation, applies with peculiar force to the doctrines of religion. It deserves, therefore, to be constantly kept in mind, during the present discussion.

First. Some think it a sufficient and conclusive objection to this doctrine, that it is *mysterious*. But it is remarkable, that the inspired Apostle had a very different conception. *Without controversy*, says he, *great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh*. Here we see, that in the moment in which he admits the deity of Christ to be a *mystery*, a *great mystery*, he nevertheless asserts it as a fact, and states it as matter of faith. *He* did not think that because it was mysterious, it was of course *incredible*. Nor can any one entertain this idea, who thinks soberly. The faculties of our minds are extremely limited in their operations. Every day and hour, we are presented with objects which we cannot pretend completely to explain, or comprehend. Above us, and around us, mysteries constantly arrest our attention. To us, the works of creation, and the ways of providence, are equally and altogether unsearchable. Above all, "what a miracle to man, is man!" Who can explain the nature and operations of a soul? Yet who so degraded, so stupified, as to doubt whether he *has* a soul? The connexion of our *material* and *spiritual* part, is wonderful indeed. How mental ideas are obtained through the medium of the bodily organs; how, by an act of my will, I raise my hand; how, by addressing words to your ears, I can excite thoughts and emotions in your minds, is perfectly incomprehensible. Yet who doubts the *reality* of these things, or of thousands beside, of a similar nature? If all the works and ways of Deity, then, are mysterious; if facts which constantly occur in the course of his providence are mysterious; is it not perfectly credible that his *nature* is much more so? Especially, when a revelation is given us purposely to communicate such truths as our minds could never explore, may it not be expected that many of these truths will likewise be such as our minds can never completely grasp?—The fact is, that neither the threefold distinction in the divine nature, nor the union of deity and humanity in the person of Christ, is more incomprehensible than many things in natural religion, the truth of which all but atheists acknowledge. They are not more incomprehensible than the existence of a Being underived, eternal, and every where present.

A *second* objection against the deity of Christ, is this : that if it were a truth, it would have been more abundantly and explicitly declared in the sacred Scriptures. Especially, it might have been expected that Christ himself, and his Apostles, would have clearly taught it. But the *reverse* of this, says the objector, is the case. In reply, it is granted, that it was the first and principal object, both of our Savior, and his Apostles, to establish his divine mission and Messiahship. And why? The moment that this point was settled, his deity followed of course. All who believed him to be the true Messiah, would believe him to be just such a person as the prophets foretold : and it is undeniable that they described him as a divine person. They spoke of him under the appellations of JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, IMMANUEL, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE JUST GOD AND SAVIOR. Whatever, then, proved him to be the Messiah, proved him to be truly and properly God. There was no occasion for our Savior, or his Apostles, to go into a labored proof of his essential dignity. They needed only to *ascertain the person* of whom the prophets wrote. Those who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was that person, might directly and undeniably infer his divinity. Hence we find our Savior giving this direction to the Jews : *Search the scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of me.* This observation is sanctioned by some of the most accurate divines. And it needs only to be kept in mind, in order completely to account for it, that the doctrine of our Savior's divinity is more sparingly taught by him and his Apostles, than some might have expected. But the fact is, that the objection is by no means true, in its full extent. Our Savior and his Apostles did *not* maintain that cautious reserve which has been stated. We have already seen that our Lord himself did, even while on earth, demand the homage of an implicit faith, a supreme affection, and an unlimited devotion. He asserted his property in the church. He claimed a sovereignty over the sabbath. He claimed a participation in the honors, the prerogatives, and the throne of his Father. No *creature* could advance such pretensions without arrogance

and impiety. We might add, that at his birth, he was expressly styled *Immanuel*, or *God with us*. At his baptism, a striking attestation was given to his divinity. In the course of his ministry, those names, perfections and prerogatives were attributed to him, which belong to none but Deity. In the epistles, his divine dignity is still more unequivocally and frequently declared.—In a word, I appeal to the reason and conscience of every thinking man, and ask; if when our Savior is styled *God*, *GOD MANIFEST IN FLESH*, *GOD OUR SAVIOR*, *THE TRUE GOD*, *THE MIGHTY GOD*, *GOD BLESSED FOREVER*; if when he is represented as *ALMIGHTY*, *OMNISCIENT*, *OMNIPRESENT*; the *CREATOR*, *PRESERVER*, and *JUDGE* of the world,—men yet demand farther evidence, they do not act an unreasonable part? If after all this, they remain unconvinced, must it not be from some other cause than the want of evidence?

Thirdly. It is objected, that the Scripture, speaking of Jesus Christ, in connexion with the Father, frequently applies to him such expressions as signify inferiority and dependence. It declares, that *the head of Christ is God*; that *the Son does nothing of himself*; that *he does the work which the Father gave him to do*; that he conducts *according to a commandment received from the Father*; that *he does not know the day and hour of the last judgment*; and in a word, that *the Father is greater than he*. This objection, my brethren, deserves a serious consideration; and I shall endeavor, not to evade, but fairly to meet and discuss it. One thing which obviously occurs in reply, and which even those who urge it, must grant to be true, is this; that if these expressions imply an inferiority in Christ to the Father, expressions of an opposite kind occur not less frequently. He is expressly declared to be *God*, to be *equal with God*, to be *one with the Father*, and to *know all things*. Hence, then, it is clear beyond dispute, that the Scripture, in different parts, makes *seemingly* contrary declarations respecting Jesus Christ; declarations in such a degree incompatible with each other, that they cannot be true in the *same respect*, and the *same sense*. Yet these seemingly contradictory assertions must be reconciled. And our adversaries are as much bound to effect this reconciliation

as we. Have they any scheme to accomplish it? No: they do not so much as pretend to this. Those expressions which imply the Savior's inferiority to the Father, they construe in their literal and most extensive sense. But those which indicate his *equality*, they either explain away, or expunge from the bible. Can this be a suitable method of treating that holy book which was dictated by the infallible Spirit, and whose every word is eternal truth? It surely cannot. Some scheme must then be adopted, which will reconcile these apparently jarring texts. This scheme can be no other than that which considers Christ as *combining two natures in his one person*; and likewise as acting in a *subordinate office* as Mediator. In this way, seeming incongruities are reconciled, and the Scripture appears worthy of its Author. Thus, and thus alone, each class of texts before mentioned, receives a natural, unforced construction. On this hypothesis, Christ is God; and he is man, and Mediator. As God, he is equal and one with the Father. As man, he is inferior to him. As God, he knows all things. As man, he must be ignorant of many; and even as Mediator, he may be said *not to know them*, in this sense; that it is no part of his mediatorial office and commission to make them known. He is God; and therefore acts in all things from the dictates of his own sovereign pleasure. He is man, and Mediator; and in these characters, receives and executes the commands of the Father. Let the advocates of any other scheme make the scripture speak a consistent language, if they can.

Fourthly. It has been objected, that the very *names* of *Father* and *Son* imply the inferiority of the *latter*. We reply, that this is by no means clear; nor is it even probable. The sense usually attached to these expressions among men, does not apply here; except in this regard, that the Son of God is of the same *nature* with the Father. But this, far from arguing inferiority, argues a real equality. It argues, not *posteriority of existence*, but *self-existence* and *eternity*. And the argument is strengthened when we add, that the Jews understood Christ's calling God his *Father*, as a *making of himself equal with God*. They considered

the expression as blasphemous. They declared that though a *man*, he *made himself God*. And as our Savior said nothing by way of retraction; as he did not deny, that in claiming to be the *Son of God*, he made himself God, we cannot rationally doubt that this is the real import and force of the expression.

Other scriptures, in the moment in which they represent Christ as the Son of God, exhibit striking and resistless evidence of his equality with the Father. *No one*, saith Christ, knoweth the *Son*, but the *Father*. In another passage, *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father*. The former expression implies, that Christ is incomprehensible by all creatures: the latter, that he knows the Father as perfectly as he is known by him. Both, therefore, strongly attest his divinity. Elsewhere he declares, that *the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son*. For what end? *That all men may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father*. In the epistle to the Hebrews, the *Father* is represented as addressing the "*Son*" in this style: *Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever*. Much critical ingenuity, and learned labor have been employed to torture the original of this text into a different meaning. But common sense revolts. And the passage, in its natural and just construction, affords decisive evidence of the true and eternal divinity of the Son.

Fifthly. An objection against the deity of Christ has been drawn from that passage in the first epistle to the Corinthians, in which it is declared; *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.....And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all*. But this passage doubtless has reference to the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, in distinction from the absolute kingdom of God, as Creator. This mediatorial kingdom, when all its interesting and glorious purposes shall have been accomplished, shall have an end. Christ will solemnly resign it into the hands of his Father; and as man and Mediator, will explicitly subject *himself* to him.

But with much force and justice it has been remarked, that "Christ's delivering up the kingdom to God the Father, no more proves that he will, in all respects, cease to be a king, or to have any farther dominion, than the Father's delivering the kingdom to the Son, proves that the Father himself then ceased to be a king, and parted with his own dominion over all." Christ's *essential* kingdom, which he possesses as God, is interminable. Nor will he, in his *human* nature cease to wear the honors of his *mediatorial* offices and works, nor to appear as the glorious Head of that beloved Church which he has purchased with his blood. But after his great commission shall have been fulfilled and resigned, the GODHEAD, including the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, will be exhibited and glorified as *all in all*; and without the intervention of a Mediator, will govern all creatures, and all worlds, for evermore.

Sixthly. It has been objected to the deity of Christ, that in one instance, at least, he refused the ascription of divine perfection to himself, by replying to one who called him "Good Master," "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one; that is God." But a momentary attention to this passage may convince us that a *contrary* construction is far more natural. Our Savior doubtless considered the person addressing him as ascribing a divine perfection to one whom *he* viewed as a mere creature. By this gentle rebuke, therefore, he seems to call upon him, either to retract his ascription, or be consistent and own him as God. The passage, therefore, far from invalidating the Savior's divinity, affords a positive argument in its support.

Seventhly. It may be thought by some, that our Savior's reply to the mother of Zebedee's children, is incompatible with his divinity. To her request that they might be permitted to "sit, the one on his right hand, and the other "on the left, in his kingdom," he is represented as answering, "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not "mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is "prepared by my Father."—But the translation is, in this instance, erroneous; and communicates an idea of which

there is no trace in the original. Let the words which our translators have *supplied*, and which are printed in italics be expunged; and let the particle *but* be exchanged for *except*, (which is here the correct rendering) and we shall have the true meaning of the passage:—*Such honor is not mine to give; except to those for whom it is prepared by my Father.* Thus it will be found, that our Savior does not disclaim the power of awarding the distinguished honors and felicities of his kingdom; but simply declares the *rule* by which he will award them. These distinctions will be made in correspondence with the eternal counsels and appointments of the Father—a declaration which no wise derogates from his own divine dignity and glory.*

* Learned Socinians, particularly of late, have multiplied comments on the original of the new Testament; and industriously circulated the idea, that a more correct translation than the common, would give material strength to their cause. But the friends of the Savior's deity have little ground of alarm. Nor need they regret the critical zeal of their opponents. It has proved contagious. The spirit of investigation has *extended* itself; and truth can never suffer by investigation. Men of talents and learning have pushed their researches far into the original languages of scripture, and into its distinguishing doctrines. The result is, that not only new *proofs* of the divinity of Christ have been discovered, but new *sources* of evidence have been laid open. As an instance, I feel myself impelled to mention some recent discoveries respecting the GREEK ARTICLE, made by GRANVILLE SHARP, a British writer. By a critical and laborious investigation of the uses of this article in the new Testament, he has discovered much new evidence of the divinity of Christ, in passages which are wrongly translated in the common version. One of his fundamental principles is this: that WHEN TWO PERSONAL NOUNS OF THE SAME CASE ARE CONNECTED BY THE COPULATIVE KAI, IF THE FORMER HAS THE DEFINITIVE ARTICLE, AND THE LATTER HAS NOT, THEY BOTH RELATE TO THE SAME PERSON. By the application of this simple principle, he has derived many clear and unanswerable testimonies to the divinity of Christ, from passages which, in the common translation, have rather a contrary appearance. I might instance in 2 Thess. i. 12; which, according to the proposed and correct translation, stands thus: "According to the grace of JESUS CHRIST, OUR GOD AND LORD."—And in Titus ii. 13; which should be read, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST." Mr. SHARP's general principles, and his mode of applying them, are sanctioned by the most eminent British critics and scholars; and his publication is doubtless worthy of the most attentive perusal of every biblical student.

Since the foregoing observations were penned (in 1310) the writer has seen Dr. MIDDLETON's *Doctrine of the Greek Article, applied to the criticism and illustration of the New Testament.* In this elaborate and learned treatise, the author, having amply investigated the uses of the Article in the Greek Classics, gives his full sanction to the views of Mr. Sharp; as may be seen in the following remarks, made with particular reference to the principle, or canon cited above: "Having investigated," says he, "the canon, and

I will name but one objection more. It is drawn from the reply of our Savior to the Jews who charged him with blasphemy in making himself God. "Is it not written," saith he, "in your law, I said ye are gods? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?"—Some would have it thought that our Savior, in this passage, claims a sort of metaphorical divinity, such as belonged to the Jewish magistrates; and that he entirely disclaims every other. But such a construction is superficial and unmeaning. The true construction is probably this. The Jewish magistrates were types of Christ. Their authority in the church was a faint emblem of his. Hence they were denominated gods. "The scripture cannot be broken;" therefore types must have their antitypes. "How dare you then," the Savior seems to say, "charge blasphemy on me, for asserting my equality and oneness with the Father; since I am the true Messiah, divinely set apart, and sent into the world; and thus the antitype of those types; the substance of those shadows; and all that in *reality*, which they were but in *name* and *representation*."* Here, then, instead of a renunciation of our Savior's claims to divinity, we have an explicit, a forcible and public avowal of them.—But I pass to shew,

In the THIRD place, that this doctrine of the deity of Christ, considered in its aspects and consequences, is a doctrine of great importance. This is a most interesting part of the subject, and would afford ample scope for a sermon. But I must restrain myself; and offer a few hints only, on which your meditations will easily enlarge.

The opposers of the Savior's divinity, especially in modern times, are prone to represent the doctrine as merely

"having explained the ground of its limitations and exceptions, I may be permitted to add, that Mr. Sharp's application of it to the New Testament, is in strict conformity with the usage of Greek writers, and with the Syntax of the Greek tongue; and that few of the passages which he has corrected in our common version, can be defended, without doing violence to the obvious and undisputed meaning of the plainest sentences which profane writers supply."

* See Dr. GUYSE in loco.

speculative ; and, even in that view, of comparatively little importance. But we cannot, without being unfaithful to the cause of truth, refrain from remarking, that in whatever light it is considered, it appears a doctrine of primary importance and interest. Nor would it be difficult to show, that it has an influence on every part of experimental and practical religion.—We might remark,

In the first place, that it affects the very foundations of christian faith and hope. It cannot be a matter of small moment whether the object of our confidence, the foundation on which we build our eternal hopes, is a creature, or the infinite God. If the Savior be not divine, where is our atonement? Where our justifying righteousness? Where the grace we need to conquer our corruptions, to sustain us in death, and carry us triumphantly through it? What satisfying evidence can we have that he is an *adequate*, as well as a suitable Savior? What evidence, that he will not fail us in the last extremity? An apostle could say; *I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.* Every christian may say the same, if he has evidence that he in whose hands he has deposited an immortal soul, is divine; but not otherwise. The best and greatest of *creatures* may disappoint his hope. *The ONLY WISE GOD*, and he alone, is *able to keep him from falling, and to present him faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.**

Farther; it is well known that *love to God*, and a *grateful sense of his love* in our redemption, are represented in Scripture as the ruling passions of the Christian's bosom, and the great, prompting principles of his conduct. Were it possible that a *creature* could redeem us, and had it pleased God to provide such a creature, the favor would be great indeed: but it is difficult to perceive how it could deserve those exalted encomiums, those enraptured celebrations, of which the Scripture is so full. How could it be conceived such a sublime and stupendous mystery, that the GREAT SUPREME, who, by a word, could call into being millions of the most excellent creatures, should give *one*

* Jude, 24, 25.

of this description, to redeem and save a world? How could this love be properly styled *love that passes knowledge*? How could it be represented as having lengths, and breadths, and depths, and heights absolutely immeasurable? And with what propriety could it be argued, that because God has not withheld such a *creature*, therefore he will certainly give us *all things*; all the blessings of grace and glory, of earth and heaven? But if we suppose that the Redeemer is the SON OF GOD, infinitely superior to all creatures, we are ushered at once into a new world. We perceive the meaning and force of those Apostolic expressions: *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his SON to be the propitiation for our sins.* At such a thought, what heart does not kindle into the liveliest ardors of love? What bosom does not heave with inexpressible emotions of gratitude to the CONDESCENDING REDEEMER, the DIVINE PHILANTHROPIST? Who is not ready to breathe out the poet's animated strains:

Talk we of *morals*? O thou BLEEDING LOVE!
 Thou maker of *new* morals to mankind!
 The grand morality is love to THEE!

Again; Christ is continually exhibited as the great object of our *obedience*! *He died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who died for them, and rose again.* Now if he who thus claims our unlimited obedience and devotion, is God, all appears natural, and fit, and proper. If Jesus is divine, he is an adequate object of our obedience. And surely, by stooping from heaven to earth, to redeem and save us, he has obtained the strongest possible claims upon our entire and everlasting devotion. But if he were a creature, would not the very demand of such homage be *erecting the standard of rebellion* against the MAJESTY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH? Could we comply with the demand, without being guilty of the grossest idolatry?—without impiously robbing our Creator and our God of his inalienable right?

In a word; the employment and bliss of heaven are frequently represented in Scripture as consisting in praising, glorifying and enjoying JESUS CHRIST. "Father, I will," (this is his own prayer) "that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." Agreeably, the Apostle Paul expresses an ardent *desire to depart, and to be with Christ*, which he feels is *far better* than to be here. And saints who have taken leave of mortality, are described, in the Revelation, as *beholding the face of the Lamb forever*, and bearing *his name in their foreheads*. They are described as singing the *new song*: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Upon this, millions of *angels*, as if unwilling to be outdone in giving glory to the Redeemer, sing, in solemn response: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." The redeemed then resume their enraptured celebrations. "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and ever." "What words," says an excellent Commentator, "could more fully and emphatically declare, that Christ is and ought to be worshipped, equally with the Father, by all creatures, to all eternity? Will any one, after reading this, assert that he is a mere man, or a created being; or that it is idolatry to worship him?" What we would particularly remark, however, is this; that such an employment must be perfectly congenial and delightful, it must afford an everlasting gratification, to those who have learned to view Christ as God, to love him as God, to trust him as God, to adore him as God, and expect their felicity from him as God. But is it not a serious question, whether those who deny the Savior's divinity, are prepared for this felicity? Could they relish it? Were they even admitted within the walls of the new Jerusalem, must they not be *dumb*, having never learned a note of the new and everlasting song, sung by the redeemed of the Lord?—But I forbear; and close the subject by a few reflections.

First. If Christ is truly and properly God; if this doctrine is as clear in its evidence, and as important in its connexions and consequences, as we have seen, then it follows, that every opposite doctrine is a great and dangerous error. Indeed to rob the Redeemer of divine honor and glory, is not merely a great error, but a great sin. If those who do this, should find themselves at last in a *mistake*; if, instead of coming for their final destiny to the bar of a creature, they should come before the omniscient and almighty God, how great must be their consternation! It is not for mortals to anticipate the sentence of that tremendous day. Still, for all of the character described, we may well tremble; we may well drop a tear. We have much reason to apprehend, that they have little acquaintance with themselves; and but faint impressions of the evil of sin, and of the purity and majesty of that God whom it offends. Should the divine glory flash on their minds; should they obtain that painful, but necessary knowledge, the knowledge of their own guilt and pollution, must they not perceive, must they not *feel*, that they need an INFINITE SAVIOR; and are undone without one? In the mean time, who can sufficiently regret, that a doctrine so essential in the Christian scheme, so important to the life and power of religion, should meet with such increasing neglect and opposition in our land. In this favored land, once distinguished for the purity of its faith and practice, it has become common, deplorably common, to doubt, to deny, to ridicule the divinity of the *Lord who bought us*. Unwearied efforts are made to pour contempt on those doctrines on which our Fathers built their hopes in life, and in death; and to give currency to a superficial, unmeaning, lifeless religion, which has little of Christianity, beside the name. Thus is moral poison diffused through a thousand channels. Thus are the best and dearest interests of immortal creatures sported with. Thus are opened the sluices of absolute infidelity.—Take away the deity of Christ; and you remove the main pillar which supports the fabric of Christianity. Soon his atonement is denied, his intercession disregarded, the evil of sin thought lightly of, and eternity forgotten. Men live and die with-

out God, and without hope; *heathens* with christian names; and principally distinguished from heathens unchristianized, by a vast accession of guilt.*—My reverend Fathers and Brethren; if we have any regard for the honor of our Redeemer, or the souls of men, we shall not be silent, or inactive at such a time. We shall boldly stand up for the truth. We shall watch and guard against the thousand nameless arts and efforts of error and irreligion. We shall especially oppose ourselves with vigor to those false doctrines which aim at the very vitals of christianity, and thus threaten to spread moral death and desolation all around. Let us be thankful that we have a DIVINE SAVIOR to preach—a Savior not only *suitable*, but *all-sufficient* for the wants and woes of our dying fellow-creatures. And let it animate us to think, that

*Seriously entertaining these apprehensions respecting the tendency of antitrinitarian doctrines, and the aspects of the present time, I have thought it a sacred duty, however painful, to express them. Many, I doubt not, who from one cause or another, may incline to think less unfavorably of the doctrines in question, are candid enquirers after truth. Some, it may be hoped, who have actually embraced them, have neither in speculation traced them into their pernicious consequences, nor in practice exhibited their corrupting effects. Should a single person of either description, be induced by any thing suggested above, to pause and contemplate the subject in the light of truth and eternity, the writer will be amply rewarded; nor will he much regret the charge of narrowness and bigotry which will doubtless by many be attached to this undisguised exposure of his views and feelings.

A much more particular explanation might have been given, of the sentiments designed to be opposed; as likewise of their congeniality with the corruption of the human heart, and their consequent tendency to cherish, to confirm and increase that corruption. But this would have protracted the sermon to an immoderate length. The following just and striking remarks on the subject, extracted from the *Evangelical Magazine*, are calculated to supply the deficiency; and they are recommended to the serious attention of every reader. May they operate as an effectual caution against the errors reprobated!

“To consider the Redeemer as a mere fallible and peccable man ----- to reject salvation by grace, the atonement of the Savior, and the influences of the Spirit—to affirm the merit of supposed virtue, while at the same time its standard is reduced extremely low—to represent sin as an evil infinitely less, both in its guilt, and its demerit, than serious Christians universally consider it—to represent the future consequences of sin as inexpressibly less tremendous than the scriptures at least *seem* to describe—cannot but be most agreeable and welcome to the haughty, the self-enamored, the worldly-minded, the lover of a little *decent* dissipation, the man who is striving to sooth a disturbed conscience, the unfledged youth who is exquisitely delighted with his fancied superiority to vulgar prejudices, and the semi-infidel, who is too well instructed, to be able to reject the argumentative evidences of divine Revelation!”

while we preach his *unsearchable riches*, he will afford us his all-gracious presence to support, to cheer, to prosper, and to bless us.

Secondly. The doctrine of the deity of Christ strikingly displays the guilt and danger of those who live in habitual neglect of him, and opposition to his gospel. It is an alarming thought, that as his dignity, excellence and glory are infinite and indescribable, their sin and perverseness in treating him thus, are proportionate. In rejecting Jesus Christ, and his offered salvation, they practically despise the eternal God; they trample on his well-beloved and equal Son, and seem determined to work their dismal way to destruction, through his tears, and wounds, and blood. This is no tragic representation. It is grounded on the express declarations of Scripture. Let every impenitent sinner think of this. At the same time, let him think of that glorious, and awful day, when the SAVIOR will be revealed as the JUDGE; and when the wicked will be ready to think even perdition light, could they but avoid his flaming eye, his insupportable frown. Think of that day when the kings of the earth, and the great men, the rich, the prosperous, and the proud, shall say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Finally. This great doctrine of the deity of Christ speaks a language of encouragement and consolation to the trembling and desponding soul. Are there those who, prest with depravity and guilt, can scarce believe that the mercy of the gospel can ever reach *them*, or that they have any concern in its invitations? Let them think a moment whose this mercy, and these invitations are. O sinners! look to Jesus. He is the Savior you want. Were he less than God, you might well despair. But banish the disheartening thought. He is *God all-sufficient*; therefore he is *mighty to save*. His person is divine; therefore his atonement is infinite; his blood can cleanse from crimes red as crimson, or black as hell. He is God; he has therefore infinite compassion and patience to bear with

creatures the most guilty and provoking, and to save them forever. He is God; and can subdue your strongest corruptions, your most inveterate foes. He is God unchangeable; nothing therefore shall ever separate those who trust in him, from his love. Like a God, he pardons; like a God, he comforts, blesses and saves. O come; lay your guilt at the foot of his cross. Commit your precious, perishing souls to his hands. *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*, and you shall never perish. You shall have a friend in death. The almighty Savior, the compassionate Shepherd, will go with you through that dismal vale. And having past the terrors and the gloom, you shall come forth into the light of his countenance, and adore, and celebrate, and enjoy his love forever. You shall sing the song, which angels *cannot sing, to him who loved you, and washed you from your sins, in his own blood.*

APPENDIX.

THOUGHTS ON THE TRINITY.

IT is of the first importance that the ideas which our minds form of the Deity, be agreeable to truth. As our God, so the whole of our religion. *Imperfection*, indeed, must necessarily be attached to all our conceptions of the HIGH AND LOFTY ONE. Yet, if regulated by the standard of his word, they will be free from positive error. Consulting the inspired volume, we learn to correct those gross and unworthy conceptions of the Divinity, which we are too prone to entertain. We discover that he is a glorious SPIRIT; eternal and immutable; self-existent and independent; omniscient and omnipotent; filling the universe with his presence; and utterly incomprehensible by all created minds. We learn too, that these natural perfections are attended by the most consummate wisdom; by a perfection of justice, purity and truth; by a benevolence boundless, inexhaustible, and in its exercises infinitely diversified. That there is a Supreme Being, clothed with these venerable and lovely attributes, is a prime dictate of nature and reason. But the Bible unfolds to view a *mystery* in the Deity, to which nature and reason are total strangers; a mystery which the mind of man, unaided by revelation, would never so much as have suspected. This mystery is a TRINITY OF PERSONS IN THE UNITY OF THE GODHEAD.

That the great Author of all things is ONE, is a fundamental truth of natural religion. It cannot, indeed, be asserted that mankind, if left to themselves, would generally make this interesting discovery. What reason dictates, is one thing. What fallen creatures, depraved in all their faculties, will, without supernatural aid, discover, is another

thing. The deplorable fact is, that nations unenlightened by revelation, have been, almost without an exception, polytheists. They have given their worship to a variety of imaginary and false deities. If, here and there, a philosopher reasoned out the truth, and dared dissent from the vulgar opinion, his reasonings appeared in the form of conjecture, rather than of certainty. We needed a Revelation, to call us back to one of the plainest principles of reason and natural religion. The very fact that the book of God gives such emphatic and reiterated instruction upon this point, *proves* that we needed it. And when the Bible has informed us that there is but one God, we can perceive that the doctrine is rational. We can demonstrate that the contrary doctrine is absurd and self-contradictory.

All who are acquainted with the sacred volume know that the Unity of the Godhead constitutes one of its distinguishing and prominent features. *Hear, O Israel*, says the great Hebrew prophet; *the Lord our God is ONE LORD*. In the new Testament, our divine Teacher quotes and enforces the same sublime declaration. By his prophets of old, the Most High abundantly inculcated upon his people this fundamental and interesting truth. *I am the Lord; that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another.—There is no God beside me, a just God, and a Savior; there is none beside me.—That they may know, from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me: I am the Lord, and there is none else. Before me there was no God formed; neither shall there be after me.*

Thus it appears from the united suffrage of reason and revelation, that GOD IS ONE. We are now to contemplate this ONE LIVING AND TRUE GOD as subsisting in THREE PERSONS.

It is well known that the use of the word *person*, in this case, has been strongly opposed. Nor needs it be dissembled that such an employment of the term is encumbered with some real difficulties. That it cannot sustain precisely and fully the same meaning, in the present case, as in its ordinary use among mankind, is readily admitted. Nor would we be very strenuous in contending

for a mere term. Still, if there is a distinction in the divine nature, which is explicitly, frequently and familiarly brought to view in the sacred Oracles; if the Bible, while it abundantly asserts that God is ONE, does likewise abundantly bring to view a SON, and a HOLY SPIRIT, as well as a FATHER; if to each of these it ascribes the names, the perfections, the works, the worship, the glory of Deity; if, both expressly, and by direct implication, it represents them as equal in honor, and in power; if to each it assigns a distinct office and agency in the great work of human redemption—then it is obviously fit that the distinction be recognised. If it is recognised, it must likewise be described. And if, through the poverty of language, no terms can be found, which are completely appropriate to the subject, those must be selected, which are *best* calculated to place it before the mind. In the case before us, the word *person*, though not wholly free from objection, is perhaps the best that can be employed, to express the distinction in the divine nature, to which we refer. In its ordinary acceptation, and in the present, it denotes one possessed of reason, intelligence and will; one capable of thinking, speaking, sending, and other personal acts; and likewise capable of sustaining and executing personal offices. In a word, it is a decisive indication of a *person*, to be susceptible of the application of one of the personal pronouns; and this, not merely in a figurative, but a proper and literal sense. Still, let it be carefully remembered, that as there is an infinite distance between the divine nature, and the human, so there is a correspondent difference between a divine and a human *person*. Human persons, for instance, are separated, one from another; whereas the persons in the Godhead, though distinguished by appropriate characters, are totally and for ever inseparable. Human persons have likewise a common nature, which is specifically the same in all; but each has not the same individual nature with the other; whereas when the persons in the Godhead are said to have the divine nature and perfections, it is meant that this is the same individual nature in all. The essence and perfections of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are numerically the same.

Again; every human person is a distinct being. As many persons as there are, so many distinct beings. But all the divine persons are one Being. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God.*

With these limitations and exceptions, which are somewhat obvious, and distinctly marked, we scruple not to apply the term *person* to a distinction in the divine nature, concerning which we acknowledge that, in many respects, it not only eludes all our attempts at definition, but transcends our highest conceptions.

If we are asked, why we employ a term which is confessedly so inadequate to represent the thing intended, we reply, that the necessity of the case justifies and requires it. In perusing the Scriptures we think we perceive in the DEITY a distinction which, however mysterious and inexplicable in its *nature*, is clearly marked in point of *fact*—a distinction much beyond that of mere *attributes*, or *relations*, or *modes of operation*—a distinction which pervades the whole system of human redemption and salvation, and which communicates its own peculiar complexion to every part. This distinction we cannot overlook; and we dare not conceal. We are constrained to speak of it. In speaking of it, we use a mode of expression which, we are conscious, falls short of the sublimity of the subject; but which, in this imperfect state of the human mind, and of human language, we believe is one of the nearest *approaches* to it. If in this we err, we trust in the boundless mercy of that BEING whose perfections we would adore and celebrate, to pardon our involuntary error. In the mean time, we would preserve our minds open to conviction. We would rejoice to have our conceptions on this mysterious theme, refined and sublimated by the researches of our more favored Christian brethren. Should any of them furnish us with a *phraseology* more adapted to the case, and more free from objection, than that which we are accustomed to employ, we will cheerfully adopt it, to the exclusion of our own. Should we ever arrive at a WORLD OF LIGHT, our concep-

* See Dr. RIDGLEY'S Body of Divinity.

tions on the subject will, we doubt not, be greatly enlarged and elevated. At present, we must be content with those humble modes of conception, and of expression, which our imperfect faculties, and imperfect condition supply.

But though we dare not, even with the Bible in our hands, undertake completely to explain or comprehend the *persons* of the ever-blessed Trinity, we can satisfactorily ascertain another point, whose practical importance is even superior. We can clearly perceive the distinct *offices* sustained and executed by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the redemption of a lost world.

The Scripture represents the Father as the prime Agent in creating, preserving, redeeming and saving the sinners of mankind. From his everlasting love and overflowing compassion for guilty men, he devised a scheme for their recovery; he sent his only begotten Son into our world, to act the Mediator's part; and he sends the Holy Spirit to make effectual application of redemption to all the heirs of mercy. The Son is described as given and sent by the Father, to assume our nature, and die for our redemption. He sustains and executes, in behalf of his people, the offices of Prophet, Priest and King, and thus saves them from sin, and all its deleterious consequences, and brings them to everlasting blessedness. The Holy Spirit is represented as sent by the Father and the Son, to reprove a guilty world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment; to renew and sanctify the hearts of the redeemed; to help their infirmities, to comfort their sorrows, to guide them into all truth, and seal them to the day of redemption.—To express the matter still more briefly: the Scripture ascribes Election to God the Father, Redemption to God the Son, Regeneration and Sanctification to God the Holy Spirit. Thus each person of the adorable Trinity condescends to employ a distinct agency in effectuating the salvation of men.

But it is time that we should more explicitly subject the doctrine of the Trinity to the test of the Bible. This we would do with the utmost simplicity. For we readily confess that the only question of real importance in the case, is this: *What saith the Scripture?* If the doctrine

will not bear this test, let it fall, though supported by the most revered names of ancient and modern times. But if sanctioned by the word of God, let it stand, though assailed by the united wit and wisdom of the world.

That the Father is a divine person, all admit. The question, then, to be decided, is, whether the Bible, construed in its natural and unperverted sense, represents the Son and Holy Spirit as divine persons also?

What does it affirm respecting the Son?

It declares, "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It styles Jesus Christ, "Alpha and Omega; the First and the Last;" the "King of kings, and Lord of lords." In the very moment in which he is denominated the "Child born," and the "Son given," he is declared to be "the Mighty God," and "the Everlasting Father." Elsewhere he is styled "God with us;" "God manifest in the flesh;" "God our Savior;" "the true God;" "the only wise God;" "God blessed forever." In the language of the old Testament, he is called, "Jehovah;" "Jehovah of hosts;" "Jehovah our righteousness,"—Here, if any where, are the appropriate and incommunicable *names* of Deity.

Our Savior addressed to the Jews, this remarkable declaration: "Before Abraham was, I AM." Agreeably, he is described in prophecy, as one "whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." "Jesus Christ" is "the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever." "The heavens and the earth shall perish; they shall wax old as a garment; but" he is "the same; and" his "years shall not fail." "All power in heaven and earth" is his; and his is that almighty and resistless energy by which "he is able to subdue all things to himself." He "knows all things;" and "all the Churches shall know that" it is "he who searches the reins and the hearts." He has promised to be with his disciples and his ministers "always, even to the end of the world." And in every part of our extensive globe, "where two or three are gathered together in his name, there" is he "in the midst of them."—Here are the characteristic *perfections* of Dei-

ty; eternity, immutability, almighty power, omniscience and omnipresence.

Of the same glorious Person it is declared that "all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made." "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible—all things were created by him, and for him." Not only so; "he upholds all things by the word of his power," and "by him all things consist." He is "Lord of all." He is "Head over all things to the Church." "His dominion is an everlasting dominion." He is "the Judge of quick and dead;" "for the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son."—Here are the peculiar and distinguishing *works* of God; the creation, conservation and government of the world; and the dispensation of the final judgment.

In fine; it is the declared will of the Father, "that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." It is his requirement that "all the angels of God should worship him;" and that on earth, "all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."—Therefore, whatever honor or worship has been claimed or received by Jehovah, is due to Jesus Christ.

If now we should institute a similar process of enquiry respecting the SPIRIT, the general result would be the same. It would be found that to the Spirit, the Scripture frequently and familiarly ascribes the incommunicable names and perfections, the appropriate works and worship of the Deity.

I am aware that most Antitrinitarians deny that the Spirit is a *real person*. They construe the term as denoting a *mode of divine operation*; or at most, an *attribute* of Deity; such as his *wisdom*, or his *power*. But is it not undeniable that the Scripture constantly represents the Spirit as a conscious, living Agent, possessing personal properties, and performing personal acts? Is it not palpably absurd to speak of an *attribute* as speaking, commanding, forbidding, approving; or as being vexed, or

grieved? Yet all these things are predicated of the Spirit. He is then a *person*, and not a mere abstract quality, or mode of operation. And if, as we have seen, he possesses divine attributes, he must be a divine person.

Before closing the argument, we would advert to two passages of Scripture, which, on the subject of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, seem to be irresistibly conclusive.

The first is the Savior's prescription of the form of baptism. This ordinance is to be administered "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." To say nothing of the absurdity of baptizing in the *name* of an *attribute*, can it possibly be conceived, that in this most solemn act of worship, a *creature* is associated with the living God? Does not the prescription obviously imply that the subject of baptism is to be religiously and everlastingly devoted to the honor and service of the MYSTERIOUS THREE? And does it not necessarily follow, that they are one in essence, and equal in glory.

The other passage is that containing the form of apostolic benediction. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." Here is a *prayer*; and a prayer obviously addressed to Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, not less than to the Father. If Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are not divine, the prayer was an act of idolatry. If it was an act of genuine and acceptable worship, as unquestionably it was, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are truly and properly divine.

What, then, is the result of our whole enquiry? It is this; that the Scriptures of truth represent the Son and Holy Spirit as really distinct from the Father; and yet, as bearing the same names, clothed with the same perfections and prerogatives, performing the same works, and receiving the same worship. The Bible likewise *associates* the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in a way which, while it obviously implies a personal distinction, implies not less obviously, an identity of nature, and an equality in dignity and glory. Hence we are warranted to assert

that the doctrine of the Trinity has the sanction of the infallible word of God.*

Let not, then, the doctrine, however incomprehensible, be denied, or disbelieved. Were it asserted merely in a few obscure and disputed texts, such as its opposers might hope to invalidate, or explain away, its rejection might be less dangerous. But it is in-wrought in the very vitals of Christianity. It meets us, in various forms, throughout the book of God. It claims the belief of all who would not reject the Bible.

But it is asked; Are we to believe what is self-contradictory? Is it not absurd, and even impossible for rational creatures to believe what is *contrary to reason*? We reply: No such thing is required. The doctrine of the Trinity is confessedly a *mystery*. Reason could never have discovered it. And when Revelation has presented it to the mind, reason cannot comprehend it. Still, is it not a plain dictate of reason itself, that in a Revelation from heaven; a Revelation designed to instruct us respecting the INFINITE BEING; mysteries might naturally be expected? When they are found, therefore, it is perfectly rational to receive them. It is the *highest act* of reason

* It is an indisputable fact, that a great majority of the plain, unlettered, unperverted readers of the Bible, have been believers in the Trinity. Nor can it be dissembled that the Antitrinitarian cause has been too frequently supported by laborious attempts, either to expunge those parts of Scripture which seem to favor the contrary scheme, or, if they are suffered to remain, to give them an unnatural and forced interpretation. A Socinian writer of the present day, warns his readers to be on their guard *against what is called the natural signification of words and phrases*. SMALCIUS, who wrote about two centuries since, holds a much bolder language. "We believe," says he, "that though we should find it, not *once*, nor *twice*, but *frequently* and *most expressly* written in the Scripture, that *God became man*; it would be much better, as it is an absurd proposition, and full of blasphemy, to invent some way of speaking, which might render it proper to be affirmed of God, rather than to understand it in the literal sense." Such a mode of treating the Bible is in the highest degree absurd and arrogant; not to say impious. What is it, but to *desert* the Scriptures, and the standard of truth; and erect an altar to our own pride and self-sufficiency? Can it be thought strange that those who take this course, are involved in endless intricacies and errors? The *first*—I had almost said, the *only* requisite to the right perusal of the word of God, and to the discovery of its great truths, is a humble, teachable mind; a mind open to receive whatever eternal wisdom shall communicate. Such a mind cannot be ultimately left to embrace essential and destructive error. The God of truth has promised that *the meek he will guide in judgment; the meek he will teach his way*.

to receive them *implicitly*, and on the mere authority of God. He perfectly knows himself. And why should it be thought strange, that when he unfolds to us the mode of his own existence, it should be something perfectly NEW, SURPRISING, and INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO MORTALS? Still, I repeat it, the doctrine before us is not, as some object, *self-contradictory*. It does not assert that three are one, in the same sense and respect in which they are three. It does not assert that three persons are one person, or three Gods, one God. It simply asserts that in the unity of the Godhead, there subsist a Father, a Son, and a Holy Spirit. It nowhere precisely defines, nor requires us precisely to define, in what respects they are three, and in what respects they are one. This doctrine, then, stated in its scriptural simplicity, is perfectly free from the charge of self-contradiction. All the absurdity which has been imputed to it, is in fact imputable to the misrepresentations, either of its enemies, or its injudicious friends.

Let it, in the mean time, never be forgotten, that it concerns us all to know something more about this doctrine, than merely that it is found in the Bible. We must find its truth in our habitual experience, or the most orthodox speculations respecting it will profit us nothing. "He," says Bishop Taylor, "who goes about to speak of the mystery of the Trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention; talking of essences and existences, hypostases and personalities, may amuse himself, and talk of something he knows not what:—but the *good man*, who feels the power of the FATHER, and to whom the SON is become wisdom, sanctification and redemption; in whose heart the love of the SPIRIT of God is shed abroad; this man, and he alone, truly understands the CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY."

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