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**SERMON V.**

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**THE TRINITARIAN AND UNITARIAN DOCTRINES  
CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST.**

ROMANS 9: 5. *Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.*

WE have in this passage of scripture, a most direct and explicit testimony to the truth of what may be called the trinitarian view of the person of Jesus Christ. It ascribes to him a perfect manhood and a true deity. Under the one aspect, it contemplates him as proceeding from a human parentage, and clothed with all the attributes of human nature; under the other, it regards him as the supreme God, to whom, and to whom alone, all honor and worship are due.

The passage itself is one which all criticism is constrained to acknowledge genuine. It can bear only one interpretation that is strictly grammatical. That interpretation, too, is the only one that harmonizes with the context, or falls in with the requirements of logical propriety. The testimony, then, is decisive.

Still, the doctrine is rejected by many. It is in its nature high and strange; and it stands closely related to other religious views, with which multitudes in every age have been offended. It has been represented, accordingly, to be incredible and contradictory to reason. Infidels have maintained, that it is of such a character in this respect as absolutely to overthrow the pretensions of christianity itself to be from God. Others, professing the christian faith, have, with the same sort of feeling toward this doctrine, expelled it utterly from their creed. According to them, it is as unscriptural as it is incomprehensible and absurd; and they undertake, accordingly, to put such an interpretation upon the bible, as may, in their apprehension, relieve it entirely from the reproach of its enemies on this ground. Every effort has been made, and still is made, to overthrow the credit which this

ancient article of faith has found in the church. Hence it has been found necessary in every age, to vindicate it from objection and abuse, and to maintain by argument its claims to be received and acknowledged as a part of the faith originally delivered to the saints. It is proposed to do so, briefly, in this sermon. The argument, of course, is too extensive for a full view; but some of its general principles may be glanced at, so as to aid at least and direct the serious inquirer in investigating the truth.

The plan I propose to pursue, is, to attempt, in the first place, the removal of some obstructions, which are found frequently lying in the way of all direct argument on this subject, and hindering the proper force of evidence in men's minds. The argument itself will then be presented, by a general statement of what I conceive to be the testimony of the scriptures about the person of Jesus Christ, and a notice of several considerations which conspire to show that the true and proper sense of it has not been mistaken.

I. I AM TO ATTEMPT THE REMOVAL OF SOME OBSTRUCTIONS, BY WHICH THE FORCE OF EVIDENCE IS FREQUENTLY HINDERED ON THIS SUBJECT. These obstructions lie chiefly in wrong views of the doctrine in question, or in an inadequate sense of its importance. In attempting to remove them, then, it is necessary, in the first place, to have the doctrine itself fairly stated.

According to the trinitarian belief, there is but one God, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being and in all his attributes. In this divine Unity there exists, at the same time, the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as three subjects or persons; and these three have equally, and in common with one another, the nature and perfections of supreme divinity. In the great work of accomplishing man's redemption, the second person of this blessed Trinity condescended to clothe himself with the human nature, for the purpose of making a suitable expiation for sin. This was done in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and comprehended in himself the two distinct natures of God and man. By this union he was qualified to stand as a Mediator between the parties, and eventually accomplished by his death the reconciliation which was needed for a lost world.

1. Now I remark, *that no contradiction to reason is offered by the view just given.* It has been frequently affirmed, indeed, that the trinitarian view labors under this objection. Those who embrace it have been represented as holding notions directly contradictory to each other, and putting terms together that involve a gross absurdity. They are charged with the offence of outraging reason and common sense, by maintaining that three may be one and one may be three. But charges of this kind proceed upon a wrong apprehension of the doctrine itself. It is not to be credited, indeed, that it could have gained the approbation and belief of so many wise men of every age, if it were really so grossly repug-

nant to reason as some have represented it to be. Names are not sufficient, I admit, to establish the truth of the doctrine itself; but they ought at least to shield it from the imputation of being absurd and monstrous; and when an article of faith stands forth to view, like this, as a part of the creed of almost the whole christian world, sanctioned by the learning and piety of every age and nation, it stands entitled, certainly, to some reverence and respect.

The doctrine of the Trinity, properly contemplated, involves no contradiction. If it were affirmed in that doctrine, that God is one and three *in the same sense*, something would be affirmed contrary to reason. But this is not affirmed. On the contrary, it is expressly stated, that God is three in a way that leaves the unity of his nature untouched. We confess ourselves unable to understand *how* God is three and *how* he is one. We give credit to the *fact* merely, as that fact is revealed, without attempting to comprehend the *mode* in which it exists. We admit our entire ignorance of the manner of the Divine subsistence. We employ the term "person," in speaking of God as three, but we do not suppose that this, or any other term we might use, can at all express the thing itself concerning which it is used. How should it be imagined that any analogies within the range of our experience, so limited and so low, should be sufficient to give us any notion of the mode in which the eternal God subsists? We confess, that what we hold as a fact on this subject is *above* reason. But, on that very account, we maintain that no man has a right to charge us with holding what is *contrary* to reason. This charge proceeds upon the supposition that we undertake to define the mode of the Divine subsistence; a thing which we solemnly disclaim.

As to the other branch of the trinitarian doctrine concerning the person of Christ, it is admitted to be in like manner mysterious, incomprehensible, and *above* reason; but most certainly it cannot be said, with any propriety, to be at war with reason. It offers no violence to any of the laws of thought. When we say, that Jesus Christ was "God manifest in the flesh," we do not pretend to understand *how* a union of the two natures could take place. We simply assert a *fact*; and we deny that the statement of the thing as a fact is repugnant to reason. There can be no room for such a charge, so long as the manner of Divine subsistence is not understood; and whenever the charge is made, it involves an arrogant pretension on the part of those who make it, of having this knowledge. How should they affirm what can be, or what cannot be, in the manner of God's subsistence, except by reason of their having had a full understanding of his nature?

2. Again I observe, that the *mysterious and incomprehensible character of the facts believed in this case constitutes no sufficient objection to the trinitarian faith*. If we reject this doctrine just because we cannot fully comprehend the manner of the facts it

teaches, I ask where we shall find a fact, presented to us with any sort of evidence whatever, which on the same principle we are not bound to hold incredible? Is not all nature a mystery in this sense—a deep and unfathomable secret, hidden from the penetration of the most profoundly wise? Facts may be ascertained; but the secret nature of things, and the mode of their existence—*what* they are in themselves, and *how* they are—are absolutely incomprehensible. What are the most complete of human sciences but histories of *facts* ascertained on their own proper evidence? When science has accomplished her utmost research, she has not instructed us what is the interior nature of the smallest atom of matter. Every blade of grass that springs forth from the earth is as full of mystery in this respect to the mind of the philosopher, minutely acquainted with all the laws of vegetable life, as it is to the eye of the child that rests only on its outward form and color. And when we ascend from the contemplation of *matter* to the contemplation of *mind*, is our ignorance less complete? What know we of the secret nature of our own souls? We watch their operations as they take place under our daily consciousness, and the results of these observations we arrange into a system of science, and call it philosophy. But after all, what have we learned of the nature of the soul itself, or of the manner of its subsistence? And, then, when we stretch our thoughts to the Infinite God—the Great First Cause, in which Life resides as in its original fountain, independent, underived, and eternally active—what can we know? There is not a single attribute of his nature which we can fully understand. The most universally acknowledged facts in relation to his existence are wrapped in impenetrable mystery to our thoughts, as soon as we come to ask *how* they can be. God, we say, is an omnipresent being—he exists fully, in all the perfections of his nature, in all places at the same moment. The fact is certain; it lies at the foundation of the whole doctrine of the divine existence. And yet who can explain or conceive the manner of that fact? Is it less incomprehensible than the doctrine of the Trinity itself? Is it less mysterious to affirm, that God exists undiffused and undivided in every point of space, than to say that there is in his nature the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, possessing equally and in common with one another, the attributes of supreme divinity? Is it less mysterious to affirm, that the Infinite One can be present with all his illimitable fulness in any particular place, than it is to say with believers in the trinitarian doctrine, that he might come into union with the finite nature of man, and in this way make himself manifest in human flesh? All these things are alike incomprehensible; and why may they not be equally true?

But the doctrine in question is not merely incomprehensible; it is new, and strange, and unsupported by any analogies drawn from the range of our past knowledge. I admit the fact, and ask, Shall we reject it on this account? If so, then must we reject all reve-

lation, and hold it impossible for God to reveal to men any truth entirely new. A revelation is no revelation at all unless it make known new truths, and such as must of necessity for that very reason appear strange. And why should it be imagined, that facts may not have place beyond the sphere of human observation, to which nothing can be found analogous within that sphere; or that such facts may not be made known to men, if God see proper to reveal them? Have we a right to restrain truth to the boundaries of our own experience? Especially, when a revelation undertakes to give men information concerning God himself, is it to be thought strange that it should declare facts entirely new and unimaginable before? Mystery, in this sense of the term, must characterize as a matter of course all true revelation.

3. It must appear from the statement of the case, *that the question proposed for consideration is of fundamental importance.* Many opposers of the trinitarian doctrine have affirmed, that the question between themselves and us does not enter so essentially into the constitution of christianity itself as to involve our final salvation in its decision. Error, they tell us, on whichever side it may lie, ought not to be looked upon as ruinous to the soul, and should not be regarded as excluding those who hold it from the christian church. It may be true, indeed, that according to that view of the divine character and government, which is generally held by Unitarians, the trinitarian belief, if wrong, would not issue in everlasting death, and might be considered, therefore, a comparatively safe error; but still it cannot be denied, that it would be a very monstrous error, and extremely offensive to God, as being nothing less than idolatry itself; and every serious man, accordingly, should feel it a matter of deep concern not to be mistaken in a case of so much consequence. But if we reverse the supposition, and imagine the trinitarian view to be the true one, it is manifest that the error of those who reject it, is an error which shuts them at once out of all interest in the christian salvation. It is nothing less than the error of infidelity itself under the disguise of a christian name. It subverts the entire gospel of Christ, and substitutes in its place a scheme of religion utterly different. It ought not to be deemed strange, therefore, that Trinitarians refuse to embrace those who hold what they conceive to be such an error, as members of the christian family. They may honor them and love them as men; but how can it be required that they should own fellowship with them as christians? To do so, would imply, in the very act, an abandonment of the entire constitution of christianity itself, in their own minds.

When Unitarians tell us, that men's faith on this subject is not a matter of *vital* interest, they betray an entire misapprehension of the place which the trinitarian doctrine occupies in the system of religion to which it belongs. In that system, it is not a mere *opinion*—a speculative dogma, to be received, and treasured up

with other notions, in the intellect. It is in the highest degree *practical*, grounding itself in the deepest feelings of the heart, and incorporating itself with the very constitution of our moral nature. It pervades and animates religion, not so much in the *objective* form of it, when it is contemplated only as a science to be studied, as in its *subjective* form, when it lives, and puts forth its living power, in the soul of the christian himself. It is a doctrine to be apprehended by the heart, more than by the understanding—a thing of feeling, far more than of pure intellection. It may indeed be held only as a notion; and no doubt it is so held by many, whose characters and lives are never affected at all by what they call their faith. But the doctrine itself is not really apprehended in such cases. This takes place only when it begins to live in the soul itself; and then it can bear no separation from the religion which is there at work. The soul feels that it is *vital*, and that the absence of it would be spiritual death.

4. In accordance with the view of the matter just given, we hold, *that a temper of mind correspondent with the character of the interest involved in the investigation, is a primary requisite for coming to the knowledge of the truth.* In all moral and religious inquiries, in which as a matter of course the principles of evidence lie ultimately in the moral constitution of our nature, as much depends at all times upon the state of our feelings as upon the strength of our intellectual powers. As a man who is destitute of all proper sense of natural beauty or order, can never speculate with certainty or security on questions of mere taste, however wide and grand may be the range of argument they embrace; so neither may the man be trusted at all in speculations upon religious truth, who shows himself wanting in the sensibilities that lie at the foundation of all true religious character. It is enough to stamp damnation upon the whole argument of infidelity, that it has been conducted in every age, and in every country, with a manifest absence of every thing like a proper tone of moral feeling on the part of its friends. Voltaire, and Volney, and Gibbon, and Hume, and Paine—and they may stand fairly representative of the entire sect—had no seriousness upon their spirits, when they put themselves forth to try the merits of christianity. The soul of the men still lives and speaks in their works, and it is found wanting in every disposition, which became the unutterable interest of the subject, and the high solemnity of the office which they undertook when they stood up to set men right in their views of it. We look in vain for that soberness of mind, that subdued and reverential frame of spirit, that deep sense of the value of truth, that earnestness to be found in the way of God, that docility, and candor, and *prayerfulness*, which are befitting the magnitude of such an inquiry. They came up to the christian argument, in a spirit of levity, and pride, and profanity, and scorn; and is it any wonder, that they did not come under the force of its evidence? And is it to be

imagined, that men of this description are worthy to be trusted as spiritual guides? There is mockery in the very thought.\*

But if a right condition of soul be needed, for trying the general argument of christianity itself, it is no less necessary for every subsequent inquiry about the peculiar doctrines of christianity. The necessity lies, as already remarked, in the constitution of our nature, and cannot fail to be acknowledged wherever that constitution is rightly understood. It is affirmed also in the most solemn manner by the voice of inspiration. It is written—*The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.* And again—*The scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not; but knowledge is easy to him that understandeth.* And again—*Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.* And again—*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.* It is vain, then, to expect that much good will come of any inquiry on the particular subject we are now considering, if it be not accompanied and actuated by such a spirit. The subject we have seen to be of fundamental importance, and pre-eminently *practical* in its relations and bearings. It enters vitally into the very constitution of christianity itself, and stretches its interest throughout the entire range of all that is to be feared or hoped for by men, in that dread eternity to which they are going. Is the mind on such a subject unassured in its belief? Then what, I ask, should be the temper with which it addresses itself to the work of satisfying its doubts? Manifestly, there should be great seriousness, and a deep feeling of the importance of the question to be solved, and an anxious earnestness to be saved from mistake, and a fervent desire to be brought into subjection to the truth, and a childlike simplicity of intention in the pursuit of instruction, and an importunate looking up in prayer to the Father of Lights for that illumination which he has promised to bestow upon the lowly in heart. Without this frame of mind, all inquiry here will prove idle and unprofitable speculation. Should it even issue in a conviction according to truth, such a conviction would be comparatively unimportant, as contributing only a *notion* to the repository of the mind's knowledge, when it ought to have lodged a living, active *principle* in the moral framework of the soul itself. And should it issue in the adoption of the most destructive error, it would be only what might have been expected as the result of such an experiment—an experiment found disastrous in unnumbered instances before, to all light, and hope, and peace, in the unhappy souls who have embarked their faith upon it.

\* See this subject well touched in "The Evidences of Christianity," by DANIEL WILSON, of Islington in England. I take this opportunity to recommend that work to all who feel an interest in the great subject of which it treats. As a popular and practical argument for the truth of the christian revelation, I know of none better. No *honest* sceptic can read it, in my opinion, without profit; and the convictions of such as have already assented to the truth, cannot fail to be strengthened, or at least refreshed, by its pages.

5. The last remark I have to make under this head of my discourse, is, *that the manner in which the trinitarian doctrine is supposed to be taught in the scriptures, is in accordance with what we have stated to be its moral character, and cannot therefore seem an objection to it in the view of the candid.* It is sometimes said by those who oppose the doctrine, that in consideration of its being so strange, so high, and so important, it ought to be taught, if taught at all, in the most direct and formal manner, and so as to preclude all possibility of mistake about the meaning of the revelation; and because it is not taught just in this way, they hold themselves justified in believing that it is not taught at all. I might remark here on the presumption of men's undertaking to decide in their own wisdom, in this way, on the particular plan which God *ought* to pursue in giving his revelations, and then proceeding to make this preconceived opinion a standard of judgment for trying what he actually *has* revealed. I might show, in the light of all our experience of the ways of God, as displayed in the constitution and course of nature, how incompetent we are to pronounce beforehand upon the proper mode of proceeding for him to adopt in any case; and how it is our duty always to take things as they *are*, on their proper evidence, instead of being offended with them for not falling in exactly with our own imaginations.\* But I am not left in the present case to such a reply, however just and sufficient I believe it to be. A satisfactory reason for the course which God has taken in the revelation of the doctrine under consideration, is found, as we have intimated, in the character of the doctrine itself, and in the relation which it bears to the grand design which that revelation contemplates—the resuscitation of the soul of man to a holy and happy life.

The doctrine, as we have already seen, stands intimately connected with the interior life of christianity, as it dwells in a believer's heart. It is not important so much as a speculative truth, to be contemplated by the intellectual eye, as it is in the character of a practical and felt reality, to be brought into immediate contact with the experience of the soul itself. The whole worth and power of it to man as a sinner, lie in its being *felt* as a fact, in all its relations to his moral wants. To be apprehended aright, it must be first incorporated as it were with the very life of his spirit. Is it strange, then, that it should be exhibited in the scriptures in its practical, rather than in its speculative form—in its moral energies, and its bearings upon the life of christianity, rather than in its naked and abstract idea, as a thing of mere intellectual conception? We do not admit, in-

\* Those who wish to see this topic of argument ably handled, may consult BURLER'S Analogy—a book, that contains perhaps more wisdom than any book of its size that ever came from man—especially in the 3d and 6th chapters of the Second Part. The argument, as conducted by him, has regard to the general subject of christianity, as liable to objections in its evidence, and not falling in with men's notions of fitness conceived beforehand; but it applies in all its force to the present case.



need, that there is any want of clear and positive instruction in the scriptures on the subject. Their testimony, as we shall presently see, is unequivocal and full. We are ready, however, to allow, that this instruction is not communicated in the formal and didactic manner of the schools. It is not stated in abstract propositions. And this, we say, is just what, from the nature of the case, might be expected. Facts are exhibited, in their practical relation to the great reality of that life of God in the soul, which christianity aims to accomplish—the only relation, in which they can have interest or importance to a ruined world—the only relation, in which they can be apprehended or understood by the human mind.

And is not this the plan, allow me to ask, on which all the instructions of the bible are communicated? Is the bible wrought up like a system of doctrinal theology, in which truths are presented to the eye of the understanding in their abstract form, and in the relationship by which they are bound together as parts of one general science? Had it been so, it had been a comparatively powerless book. Its power lies pre-eminently in the practical form of its instructions. Truth is put forth in embodied action. Doctrines are exhibited in their living force. The science of Christianity is represented only as a great fact taking place in the experience of the soul. It lies in the bible, just as it lies in the regenerated heart; and it lies in both, just as the science of physiology lies in the human body, or as the science of natural philosophy lies in that world of material nature with whose substantial forms and living energies we are brought into contact from day to day.

II. I NOW PROCEED TO STATE AND ENFORCE THE DIRECT ARGUMENT, BY WHICH THE TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE IN REGARD TO THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST IS SUPPORTED. And here we are shut up entirely to the testimony of revelation. The only question is, What do the scriptures teach on this subject? My limits do not allow me to quote their testimony at large. I can only state it in general propositions, and refer to particular passages for the necessary proof. The passages referred to will be but a *selection* out of many witnessing to the same truth; but if seriously considered, they will be enough, and more than enough, to answer the purpose for which they are appealed to.

Jesus Christ is affirmed in the scriptures to have TWO NATURES. That he was possessed of a real human nature, is not disputed. A multitude of texts are continually dwelt upon by Unitarians themselves in proof of this point, and in support of their own doctrine; as if by proving Christ to have been a man, they could settle the question about his divinity. But the scriptures clearly attribute to him *another* nature, of a higher and more excellent kind. In proof of this, consult John in his Gospel, 1:14.18. 3:13. 6:33.38.46.50,51.62. 8:14.23. 16:28. 17:5. Aso, 1 Cor. 15:47—49. 1 Tim. 3:16. Rom. 1:3,4. Gal. 1:1.11,12.

Christ is affirmed to have existed BEFORE HIS APPEARANCE IN THE FLESH. This is asserted, or implied, in most of the passages already referred to. See besides, John 1:15. and 8:58.

ETERNITY is ascribed to him. John 1:1. 17:5. The phrases, *In the beginning*, and, *Before the world was*, are used to describe eternity, as may be seen by referring to Ps. 90:2. and John 17:24. In proof of Christ's eternity, see also Heb. 1:10—12. and Rev. 22:13. compared with Rev. 1:8.

The scriptures ascribe to Christ also, the attribute of OMNIPOTENCE, Phil. 3:21. The attribute of INDEPENDENCE, John 1:4. *In him was life*, as in its own fountain. Compare John 5:26. and 10:18. The attribute of OMNISCIENCE, Matt. 11:27. John 6:46. John 2:24,25. 6:64. Acts 1:24. 1 Cor. 4:5. Rev. 2:23. also John 21:17. The attribute of OMNIPRESENCE, Matt. 18:20. The attribute of IMMUTABILITY, Heb. 1:11,12. compared with Ps. 102:25—27.

The scriptures ascribe divine works to Christ. He is represented as the CREATOR and PRESERVER of the world, John 1:1—3.10. Col. 1:15—17. Heb. 1:3.10. He is represented as accomplishing REDEMPTION and SALVATION for men by himself—the Light of the world—the Fountain of life. This is the grand testimony that runs throughout the sacred volume. He is represented as administering the GOVERNMENT of the world. See Matt. 28:18. Acts 10:36. Rom. 14:9. Eph. 1:20—22. The last JUDGMENT, it is said, shall be conducted by him. He will raise the dead, and bring to light the secrets of all hearts, and award to the unnumbered millions of the human race the sentence of righteousness, by which the honor and truth of Jehovah himself are to be sustained in the sight of the universe. John 5:22,23,27—29. Acts 10:42. 17:31. Rom. 14:10. 2 Cor. 5:10. 2 Tim. 4:1. Matt. 25:31—46.\*

\* The argument for the divine character of Christ, drawn from the works which are ascribed to him, is one with which the enemies of the trinitarian doctrine have always been much perplexed; and the most desperate expedients have been resorted to, to get clear of its force. At one time, the difficulty was thought to be surmounted by resolving all into mere *delegation*. In performing these works, it was said, Christ is to be regarded as fulfilling a commission received from God, and as exercising extraordinary powers conferred upon him by God for the purpose. It was admitted, at the same time, that these powers were made really and truly to reside in him for the timebeing; so that his agency in accomplishing his works was altogether different from that of Moses, and other messengers of God, in the miracles which they wrought; for they only *announced* the fact that a miracle was about to take place, but employed no agency of their own for bringing it about, whereas the mighty works of Christ are constantly referred to his own immediate power. This was a theory, however, which could not long endure examination. That Christ, in his mediatorial character acted in the capacity of a Servant and with delegated authority, is a truth clearly taught in the Scriptures, and perfectly consistent with the view that is taken of his person by those who hold the doctrine of his divinity; but the notion of ability to accomplish divine works being conferred by delegation, is contrary to all reason. Delegation may bestow *title* and *right*; but it can communicate no *capacity*. It cannot *qualify* for the discharge of the functions of the office delegated. It supposes, in the very nature of the case, that the necessary qualifications are already possessed. In this case, moreover, the qualifications required are of such a kind that they are altogether unsusceptible of such a communication from one being to another as is here supposed. They must

The scriptures teach, that divine HONOR and WORSHIP properly belong to Christ. John 5:23. Phil. 2:10. Heb. 1:6. The apostles and primitive christians exhibited this worship in their example. Acts 1:24. 7:59,60. The word *God*, in the passage last referred to, is not in the original text, and ought not to have been introduced in the translation. Jesus Christ was the person on whom Stephen called. See also 2 Cor. 12:8,9. 1 Thess. 3:11—13. 2 Thess. 2:16,17. In fact, throughout the whole New-Testament, he is exhibited as the Great Object of the faith and hope and trust of his people. They are encouraged to place an unbounded reliance upon him, and to look to him for all blessings, temporal and spiritual.

Thus do the scriptures explicitly ascribe to Christ the proper *attributes*, and *works*, and *worship*, of the one ever-living and only true God. Need we be surprised, then, in finding the *names* of deity in like manner bestowed upon him? or hesitate to take the appellations thus given in their full and proper sense? *The Word*, it is written, *was God*. John 1:1. *My Lord, and my God!* was a profession of faith made by an apostle himself, and made without rebuke, John 10:28. He is styled, *God manifest in the flesh*, 1 Tim. 3:16. and again, *The true God, and eternal life*, 1 John 5:20. and in our text, *God over all, blessed forever*. See also, Isaiah 9:6. Matt. 1:22,23. Acts 20:28. Heb. 1:8. also Tit. 2:13. and 2 Pet. 1:1. Even the incommunicable name of the supreme God, JEHOVAH, is appropriated to him without qualification, as may be seen by comparing Luke 1:16,17. with Isa. 40:3. Mal.3:1. Mat.3:3. and John 3:28.; also, John 12:41. with Is. 6:1—10.; also, Heb. 1:10. with Ps.102. In all these passages of the Old Testament, it is the the name Jehovah which is translated LORD, and no other can be properly understood in the corresponding passages of the New.

from their nature be original and inherent in the being by whom they are possessed. The Creation of the world, the Government of the world, and the administration of the last general Judgment, are works that require for their accomplishment the attributes of *omniscience*, *omnipotence*, and *independence*. These attributes are in their nature as incommunicable as the essential glory of Jehovah himself. To suppose that God might confer any one of them upon a creature, is to suppose that all the attributes of divinity might be made to reside in a being of this kind—or that a mere creature is capable of being made God, in the highest sense of the term.

Pressed with this insupportable difficulty, the arian theory has never been found a sufficiently tenable position by the anti-trinitarian party. In modern times, accordingly, it has been in a great measure abandoned. We still hear something said about a delegation to the office of Judge in the great day, by which *capacity*, as well as *authority*, is to be lodged in the man Christ Jesus; though at the same time such a character is ascribed to the office itself, as it is to be exercised by him, and the functions belonging to it are so let down beneath the nature of the case and the plain representations of the Bible, that attributes far less than divine are supposed to be sufficient for the occasion. But a more summary mode of escaping the trinitarian argument is adopted, in regard to the works of creation, and providence ascribed in the scriptures to Christ. What is said in relation to these, they tell us, is all *figurative!* The creation of which he is the author, is only a *moral* creation, or the establishment of the christian religion. His dominion over the world consists only in the prevalence of Christianity among the nations. Even what is said about his judging all mankind, may mean only that they shall be judged by God himself according to the declarations of the gospel!!

It must be acknowledged by all, that these proofs of the divine character of Christ *seem* very full and convincing. An attempt to set them all aside, and to interpret away the whole testimony which they are supposed to involve, would appear too desperate to be thought of. That attempt, however, is actually made. It is maintained, that we attach a wrong meaning to the language of the sacred volume; and we are required to contest every inch of ground over the wide field of criticism and interpretation, in order to make good our argument. This has been done amply and triumphantly by men every way qualified for the task. There is no space at present for entering upon any controversy of that kind, in regard to a single text; nor do I think it at all important. I am content to submit the evidence presented, just as it is, direct and plain and broadly diversified and harmonious in all its parts, to the judgment of every serious and candid mind. I shall only add some considerations of a general character, which, in my opinion, conspire to show that the true and proper meaning of the scriptures on this subject is what it has been supposed to be in the trinitarian argument.

1. If it be not so, it cannot be denied, *that the scriptures are so constructed as to be most easily misunderstood, in a case of the very deepest interest to religion.* It is in vain to say, that they lend no apparent support to the trinitarian doctrine. Not only in one or two passages, or by a few incidental or ambiguous references, do they seem to countenance that doctrine; but they so express themselves, that it is continually forced into view, and the plain and simple reader can hardly fail to be carried away with the impression that they mean to hold it up as the very truth of God. It meets him under all different aspects, and is found incorporated, *to all appearance*, with the entire scheme of the gospel. And is it, after all, an error? How strange, that a revelation so much at war in its professions with the sin of idolatry, should yet be so constructed as to put men in danger of the most disastrous idolatry ever known in the world!

2. *What might have been apprehended in this case, has actually taken place.* Trinitarianism has been the general faith of the church in all ages. It has been attempted, indeed, to prove that it crept into the church after the apostolic times, and that the first christians did not embrace it. But, even on that supposition, how is the accomplishment of such a momentous change to be accounted for, without admitting that the sacred scriptures are so constructed as to encourage and sustain the dreadful heresy, that so soon and so universally obliterated every trace of the primitive creed? And shall we imagine, that God has left the christian world, to this day, to labor under a fundamenatal mistake in regard to the revelation which he condescended to make through the gospel, and to be given up to a wretched idolatry by the use of the gospel itself—with only the partial exceptions that stand out from the general desolation, like the oases, or green islets of the desert, where the power of Unitarianism has been felt?

3. *The theology in which the trinitarian doctrine is denied, has always shown itself unstable, and its tendency has always been downward, in a direction towards pure deism.* Arianism, which admits the pre-existence of Christ, and takes in its proper sense what is said of his attributes and works and worship, would seem to be at first view the natural form for that theology to assume. And that form it has assumed in ages past; but it has been constrained to throw it off, on account of the unmanageable difficulties

with which it was attended. Socinianism, though a vastly lower ground, has been found equally untenable. It has given place, accordingly, to Humanitarianism, in which Christ appears as a mere man, born of human parents in a natural manner, and bearing only a prophet's commission for the reformation of the world. This scheme again, as might be expected, betrays a constant tendency to get clear of its own difficulties, by discarding the idea of revelation altogether, and sinking into mere Rationalism or Infidelity. This is the consummation to which the Unitarianism of Germany has actually come; and from the depths of this horrible abyss of night, it is now heard proudly vaunting its own powers of *reason*, and rejoicing in its marvellous *light*.

4. *To sustain the pretensions of the unitarian creed, resort is had to expedients that tend to unsettle all the foundations of Christianity.* If it were in the bible, one would think it should need no great art to draw it thence. But it is truly astonishing what an array of criticism and ingenious interpretation has been put in requisition, for the purpose of making the scriptures speak on this subject, as it has been supposed they ought to speak. Daring liberties with the text—loose principles of exposition—crude notions about inspiration—irreverent views of sacred truth, have been the consequence. Unitarianism in this way puts all truth in danger. That this is its proper tendency, appears from all its history. In Germany we behold the tendency fairly acted out.

5. *In order to uphold Unitarianism, it is necessary not only to set aside the trinitarian view of the person of Christ, but also to reject the whole scheme of religion of which it is a part.* That view is intimately and essentially connected with other doctrines of great consequence, which, like itself, appear to be taught in the scriptures. It is not enough, therefore, to combat with this alone; the controversy must be extended over the whole field of theology, and the cause cannot be said to be gained, till every part of what is termed the *Evangelical system* is fairly disproved. This doctrine is a constituent part of that system, and cannot be taken away without overthrowing the whole. Whatever of testimony there is, then, in the bible to the truth of that system in any of its parts, it must be regarded as lending corroboration to this particular doctrine. Unitarianism, accordingly, is put upon the task of bringing in another gospel throughout.

6. *In doing this, great darkness, and confusion, and want of meaning, are introduced into the sacred volume.* The typical character of the old dispensation is in a great manner given up, and thus the connection between Judaism and Christianity is made to disappear. They are no longer parts of one grand scheme; and the strange constitution of the Jewish church is left an unexplained and inexplicable riddle. The prophecies of the Old Testament, too, lose a great part of their significancy, and become wrapped in darkness, or else shorn of strength. In the New Testament, a constant perplexity is made to hang around all that pertains to the character of Jesus Christ. The hypothesis adapts itself only to *some* representations that occur on this subject, while *others* are not met by it at all. It does not show itself adequate at all to a full comprehension of the different facts to be explained. It fails to bring them together in any harmonious and consistent scheme. Then a like unsatisfactoriness is found to characterize it, when it undertakes to explain the nature of Christ's mediatorial work, and the character of his salvation. The representations of scripture are not adequately met. Not only *language*, but *things* also, are made to appear without

meaning. The sacred writers are found expressing themselves continually in a way, that is either unmeaning altogether, or grossly inaccurate, or extravagant in the extreme.

7. *The unitarian scheme of religion does not adequately meet man's spiritual wants.* The bible professes to make known a salvation commensurate with the utmost necessities of our nature. It cannot be interpreted aright, therefore, unless regard be had to the correspondency thus established between its truth and these necessities. That truth will always prove itself, by a practical development of its power in the human soul. Now, Unitarianism, I affirm, has not power to relieve the spiritual wants of men, as they are delineated in the bible, and as they are felt by the awakened spirit itself. It cannot take away the conscience of guilt. It cannot bring the soul into any sensible contact with God. It cannot give it power to lean upon Him, to rejoice in Him, or to hold free and confiding fellowship with Him. It cannot rescue the soul from the power of earthly affections, or give it refuge from the cares and fears and sorrows of the present life; and it contains no resources equal to the exigencies of a dying bed. It turns the sinner over upon himself for righteousness, and light, and strength, and peace; and in so doing, leaves him destitute of all. Hence it has always happened, that conviction of sin and spiritual want has of itself been sufficient to convince such as have had it, of the vanity of this system of religion. Let a man wake to the knowledge of himself, and of his relations to God, and he will turn himself some other way for rest.

8. *Unitarianism is found wanting, when tried by its influence upon character.* The motives which it presents to men, for the purpose of engaging them to a holy life, are comparatively weak and inefficient. Its standard of righteousness itself is low. The views which it takes of sin and of the divine character, are not such as are suited to put the soul upon any very diligent effort after sanctification. That in which holiness especially consists, a right frame of heart toward God, is in a great measure lost sight of, and an attention to the social virtues is set forth as the chief part of religion. The tendency of the system is not certainly to promote humility, or self-denial, or spirituality, or zeal in the service of God, or heavenly-mindedness. And when we appeal to actual life, this defect is clearly seen. According to all history and observation, Unitarianism is not by any means so well adapted to produce a character of piety and devotion, as the system to which it stands opposed. When we look for piety as it has exhibited itself in such men as Augustine, and Luther, and Calvin, and Owen, and Baxter, and Howe, and Leighton, and Pascal, and Spener, and Francke, and Wesley, we must turn our eyes in a quite different direction to find it.

9. *Unitarianism is found to be, under every form, a lifeless and inefficient system.* The religion of the gospel is represented to be ever active and diffusive. When planted in the soul, it grows there and gathers power continually, working itself out into the whole life. It stretches itself abroad, also, in benevolent interest to all around, and seeks to subdue all things to itself, and to pervade them with its power. In this respect, it is like leaven hid in meal, which by its own nature cannot be at rest, but works and diffuses its power abroad, till the whole is leavened. I know of no more certain characteristic of true religion, as delineated in the word of God. But where do we find this vital energy lodged in the faith of Unitarians? It is notoriously inoperative and destitute of strength. We have just seen its want of efficacy in the formation of individual character. Its insufficiency for promoting the

growth of the church and the salvation of the world, is equally complete. What has it done in this way in ages past? What is it doing now? Where is its zeal for the conversion of men to God, its enlarged schemes of benevolence, its missionary enterprises? But why do I talk of these things, when even the vitality that is wanted for its own preservation is not found in the system? Its tendency is always to decay. It dies, even while it seems to live. The principle of continuance is not in it; much less, the elements of growth.\*

I shall conclude with urging upon all the high importance of their having a true understanding of the doctrine concerning Jesus Christ, so as to know the power of it in their own experience, and so as to make it live in their lives.

Is there truth in the revelation of the gospel? Is it a fact, that a movement so high and vast and mighty as that which it represents, has taken place on the part of Heaven for the restoration of this lost world to holiness and life? Is it a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that God has so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life? Has there been a real transaction, comprehending in itself all that is magnificent and stirring in the idea of Christianity? Is there something more than a notion, a dreamy speculation, wrapt up in the mighty theme of this religion? Then, surely, it is worthy of all the regard that can be given it by any of the children of men. It is meet that it should absorb all other interests. What are the largest interests of time—the cares of wealth, the pursuits of ambition, the politics of nations—in comparison with the world of glory that is here unfolded to view? One would think that there was power enough here to put all the mass of human society in motion. And it would be so if the truths involved in religion were at all apprehended as facts; but we have the most melancholy evidence in every direction that they are not so apprehended.

Be it deeply impressed upon every mind, that a mere assent of the understanding to any of the doctrines of christianity, is a matter of but small account. "The words which I speak unto you," said Christ on one occasion, "they are spirit, and they are life." No doctrine of the gospel can be said to be fairly apprehended, till it is made a thing of actual experience, directly or indirectly, in the history of the soul. Every doctrine has a bearing upon character and feeling and conduct, and must be understood *practically*, if ever it is understood at all. It is perfectly possible, therefore, and it is, alas, dreadfully common, for persons to embrace and hold the trinitarian view of the person of Christ, while yet the dark and dreary desolation of Unitarianism itself continues to reign throughout their spirits. The true doctrine is received, but not discerned. It dwells only as a dead notion in the mind, destitute of all the light, and power, and glory, that should attend it. It has not become incorporated at all with the life of the soul, nor developed as a fact in its experience. This is the case in every instance, where the truth is held without being productive of the great fruits of righteousness; where it

\* "The modern history—the fate, and the present actual condition of the doctrine, absurdly called Unitarianism, is quite enough to convince any man of sense that the sceptical argument is a mere sophism, even if he knew nothing of the merits of the question. And this edifying history, and spectacle, does in fact produce a proper effect upon the minds of men, and does actually seal the theological argument, as it ought. Is Unitarianism Christianity?—Read the story of its rise in modern times, of its progress, and decay, and look at the meagre phantom as now it haunts the dry places it has retired to!—is this pitiful shadow Christianity?"—SATURDAY EVENING.

puts forth no power to draw off the heart from this present world, and to quicken it in the way of holiness and eternal life. Let no one imagine, then, that he has any proper knowledge of Christ, if that knowledge be not such as takes hold upon the very foundations of his spiritual nature, and exerts a transforming influence upon his character and life. Such power there is in that knowledge when truly possessed. It delivers the soul from darkness and death, and enables it to overcome the world, and to take hold upon eternal life. "This is Eternal Life.... it is written.... that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Why should any be willing to cheat themselves here with notions and fancies for the great realities of religion? Why should the soul not enter into the experience of this great and glorious thing, instead of amusing itself with the mere shadows and unsubstantial forms of truth?

And as the doctrine we have been contemplating cannot be rightly apprehended, except by coming into contact with the interior life of the soul, so neither can it be properly defended against the objections and reproaches of its enemies, except by being lived out before them in its practical power. It is, after all, a comparatively small matter to maintain the cause of christianity, or of any of its doctrines, by argument addressed to the understanding in abstract form, however sufficient and convincing it may be in itself. It is when the truth is made to live in the lives of those who hold it, that it becomes clothed with its highest authority in the view of others. A single holy man or woman, in whom the power of christianity reigns with transforming and sanctifying influence from day to day—in whose spirit, and conversation, and walk, the great lessons of the gospel are exemplified, and its great doctrines exhibited in their practical operation—is a more persuasive argument of the truth of religion than the most labored defence of it that ever was drawn up with the pen. It is by this kind of exhibition, rather than by any other, that the truths of christianity have ever asserted their proper power in the world. They have sustained themselves in all ages amidst the errors, and prejudices, and corrupt passions of men, and perpetuated themselves in their original form from generation to generation, not so much because they have always had acute and powerful spirits engaged for their defence, as because they have been lodged in the souls of believers as a part of their own living experience, of which they had no power to divest themselves, and have stood out in their lives as facts, against which disputation could be of no avail. As this remark holds of the christian religion as a whole, so is it good also in regard to each characteristic doctrine belonging to it. There is such a thing as causing them to stand out as it were in a living and tangible form, and making the power of them a thing to be felt. Thus may the true doctrine concerning Christ be made manifest to the consciences of men around, with a more irresistible light than in any other way, when it has entered truly into the experience of the soul, and been felt in its adaptation to all the spiritual wants of the soul; when in this way it becomes incorporated with the believer's interior life, and from thence shows itself forth in the spirit which he breathes, and in the whole habit of his daily living, by the production of such fruits of peace, confidence, courage, zeal, disinterested benevolence, victory over the powers of the flesh and this present world, heavenly-mindedness, and joy in the Holy Ghost, as cannot fail to attest the mighty power of God in the faith out of which they grow. How this argument speaks from the character and life of Paul!