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ARTICLE I.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

Among all the absurdities that prevail among those who receive the Scriptures as a Divine revelation, none perhaps, is more astonishing than that which disrobes our Saviour of his Divinity. Christ is not the Supreme God, but a creature only, is the opinion of an Arius, a Socinus, a Priestly, and a Belsham, and their numerous disciples, in direct opposition to what we deem the explicit teachings of both the Testaments, which they professedly believe and revere. It is really strange, in our judgment, that candid and intelligent men, after even a cursory examination of the Scriptures, should ever arrive at such a conclusion. There is no better evidence of the extraordinary subtlety of Satan, in his work of deception and ruin, than the effort he makes, and the success with which that effort is attended, to divert serious minds from the obvious import of Divine revelation, and occupy them with a creed that has its origin in a grievous perversion of truths of infinite moment. If he cannot utterly destroy the word of God, nor arrest its circulation, he will destroy its influence, by adulterating, or else by torturing it. This remark is made with all due respect toward those whose views we are about to combat. We should all be humble enough to acknowledge that we are possibly holding with tenacity, errors which are to be attributed to Satan's power over us.

There are two facts with which our minds should be deeply impressed. The wonderful constitution of our Saviour's person, which, as we believe, combines the Divine and

will, but as able, when the time shall come, to turn the hearts of all, to bow all stubborn knees, and to make all human souls willing to the reign of him whose right it is to rule.

There was once a man among us, one of the humble and childlike great men of other days; the Washington of the theological chair; a man of giant intellect, but one who found theodicy enough for him, in the written word of God; a man in whose decease there passed away from the earth, intellect enough to have made very many ambitious Theodices, but who has left upon paper, almost nothing to show his mighty powers; from whose lips it was once our labour of love to catch falling pearls of deep and genuine, but temperate and modest wisdom, and commit them to paper, for others sake and not for his. Here is one such pearl, with which we conclude this article:

"I have never read a treatise on the subject of the power of motive over the will, which did not seem to lean too far one way or the other. If the power of motive is made to deprive the mind of all causal power, it takes away guilt. If it gives it too much self-determining power, it removes the sovereignty of God, and contradicts the Scriptures. How a free being is controlled by the sovereign God, is, perhaps, a secret to the highest angel in Heaven. Most treatises on the subject are attempts to find out this deep secret. It is better to let the metaphysics of this point entirely alone."

ARTICLE V.

ON ELOHIM AS A TITLE OF GOD, AND AS IMPLYING A PLURALITY IN THE GODHEAD.*

The names of the Deity in general and constant use in the Hebrew language are more numerous than in either of the beautiful languages of classical antiquity,

* Intended to illustrate and confirm the argument from this name in the article on the objection to the Trinity, founded on the unity of God, in the January No. of this Review.

er in the most cultivated tongues of modern Europe. There was no shadow of necessity, difficulty, or even inducement, for the adoption of a phraseology which, *on Unitarian principles*, every candid mind must confess, can with difficulty, if at all, be defended from the charge of pernicious example and very dangerous tendency.

Among these names, are the term ELOAH, a singular form of a word signifying the object of fear, reverence, or the principal and mighty, or the swearer, or one who enters into covenant by oath,—and ELOHM, which is a regularly formed plural of the singular word, and having the same meaning, if regarded as derived from it. The etymology of this word, however, says Dr. Pye Smith, has been much contested; some making it a compound of *El*, and *Jah*, so as to signify “the Mighty *Jah*”; others deriving it from *Ala*, “to enter into an engagement by oath,” and thus signifying “the Being of sworn veracity and faithfulness.” The most reasonable and probable derivation, so far as I can judge, is that of Schultens, Reineccius, and a host of the most eminent orientalists, who make its primitive, *Ala*, which, though not occurring in the existing remains of the Hebrew, is preserved in the Arabic “*Alaha*,” and denotes “to adore.” Hence, the noun will signify “the object of adoration,” or, as the illustrious Schultens well expresses it, “*Numen Tremendum*.”*

Much however, may be said, and we think, with great force, and no little Scriptural support, in favour of the first derivation. The word Eloah signifies a denouncing of a curse, a curse denounced either upon oneself or others, or both, and therefore, an oath taken or given, for what is an oath but a conditional curse or execration? It was so used by the ancients; and, to this manner of swearing our blessed Lord himself submitted.—(See Matt. xxvi: 63, 64.) Hence, the word Elohim, which is a regularly formed masculine plural of Eloah, would naturally signify the denouncers of a conditional curse. So, we find Jehovah swearing to Adoni, (Psalm cx.,) on oath, certainly prior to the creation.—See Prov. viii: 23, and seq., comp., John xvii: 5, 24. According-

* Smith's Messiah, vol. i., p. 465.

ly, Jehovah is at the beginning of the creation called Elohim, which implies that the divine persons had sworn when they created. It was from this oath that the ever blessed Three were pleased to take that glorious and fearful name, (Deut. xxviii: 58,) Jehovah Elohim; glorious, in as much as the transaction, to which it refers, displays in the most glorious manner, the attributes of God to men and angels; and fearful, in as much as, by one part of the oath, eternal and infinite power, Jehovah himself, is engaged to make the enemies of Christ his foot-stool.—Psalm cx.

Let those who have any doubt whether Elohim, when meaning the true God, Jehovah, is plural or not, consult the following passages, where they will find it joined with adjectives, pronouns, and verbs plural, Gen. i: 26, iii: 22, xi: 7, xx: 13, xxxi: 53, xxxv: 7; Deut. iv: 7, v: 23, or 26; Josh. xxiv: 19; 1 Sam. iv: 8; 2 Sam. vii: 23; Ps. lviii: 12; Is. vi: 8; Jer. x: 10; xxiii: 36. So, chald. Elohin, Dan. iv: 5, 6, 15, or 8, 9, 18. See also Prov. ix: 10, xxx: 3; Psal. cxlix: 2; Eccles. v: 7, xii: 1; Job v: 8; Is. vi: 3, liv: 5; Hos. xi: 12, or xii: 1; Mal. i: 6; Dan. vii: 18, 22, 25. It is also to be observed, that the Greeks had, from this name Elohim, by a perverted tradition, their Ζεύς ὁπίστος Jupiter, who presided over oaths. Hence, also, the corrupt tradition of Jupiter's oath which overruled even Fate itself, that is, the fated and necessary motions of the elements of this world.*

The derivation here adduced, is very ably supported by Geddulph, in his *Theology of the Early Patriarchs*, vol. ii., pp. 1-27; and favourably regarded by Horsely in his *Biblical Criticism*.

This view was ably defended by Hutchinson, Calcott, Bates, Ahoab, and others in their dissertations on this word.—See also, Calasio's *Concordance*, London Edition.

But, passing from the derivation of this word, we remark that this term Elohim, is the most usual appellation of the Deity in the Old Testament, which is constantly translated God. The singular form Eloah occurs chiefly in the poetical books;—twice in the Hymn of

* See Parkhurst's *Heb. Lex.*, sub. nom. *elohim*.

Moses, (Deut. xxxii: 7,) several times in the Prophets, forty times in the book of Job, and in the other books sixteen times; but the plural Elohim, occurs about two thousand five hundred times. This plural appellative is generally put in agreement with singular verbs, pronouns, and adjectives, as in the first sentence of the Pentateuch, "Elohim created;—creavit Dii;—les Dieux créa." This is the ordinary construction through the whole Hebrew Bible. But sometimes the apposition is made with verbs, pronouns, and adjectives in the "plural" number likewise; and sometimes singulars and plurals are put together in the same agreement.

For example, Gen. xx: 18. "*Elohim hithoo outhi*," the Gods have caused me to wander."

Gen. xxxv: 7, "*Sham nighlo elau haelohim*," "there were revealed to him the Gods."

Josh. xxiv: 19, "*Laarod eth Jehovah ohl lo him kido-shim hoh*," "to serve Jehovah, for he are holy Gods."

Is. liv: 5, "*Chi boalaich oosaich*," "for thy husbands are thy makers."* Nor is Elohim the only divine title used in the plural form. Drusius, Buxtorf, Heeser, Eichhorn, Gesenius, and other distinguished scholars, have maintained that "Adonai and Shaddai," are plurals of an obsolete form; and this very plural title is the word which the Jews of a very early age, certainly hundreds of years before Christ,† substituted for the use of the title Jehovah, which they never pronounce, and for which singular title of God they have always employed, and now always employ, the plural title "Adonai, my Lords."

This Ewald controverts, but he assigns no satisfactory reason, as apparent to me, in either case; and Gesenius remains unconvinced; whose opinion in a case of philology, especially, if at all favourable to a doctrine of revelation is really equal to an argument.

It is further to be observed, that the first person plural, is used in reference to the Divine Being.—Gen. i: 26. "And Elohim said, let us make man in our image,

* See also, Deut. v: 23; (Engl. v: 26;) 1 Sam. xvii: 26; 2 Sam. vii: 23; Psal. lviii: 12, cxlix: 2; Prov. ix: 10; Jer. x: 10; Dan. vii: 18, 22, 25, 27; Hos. xii: 1; (Engl. v, xi: 11.)

† Since it is so used in the Septuagint.

according to our likeness," chap. iii: 22. "And Jehovah Elohim said, behold the man is become as one of us," chap. xi: 7. "Come, we will go down, and there we will confound their language," Is. vi: 8. "And I heard the voice of the Lord (Adonai,) saying, whom shall I send, and who shall go for us?"

Such are the facts in regard to the employment of a plural title in connection with plural forms of speech, to designate the Deity. This use must be in accordance with a divine intention and direction, and not from any necessity in the case. It is evidently, the result of choice and design. In what then did this peculiarity of idiom originate?

The question is, why is the plural pronoun used, when the singular was required by the subject, and would have been, not only equally dramatic, but indeed, more terse, and vigorous, and striking? The question is not about the analogous, unfrequent, and secondary application of the title to express Gods who were false, or God's agent as Moses. "It is, says Dr. Smith, about the proper, primary, and direct signification of the word." That Elohim is ever so applied to any other being than God, has been denied. But, granting that it is so, this will not prove that in its proper and primary meaning it is applied to God, and that too, with unquestionable design. For the same is true of all the titles of God, not even excepting Jehovah which, as Oxlee remarks, "Though generally regarded by the Jews as a noun appropriated to the individual subsistency of the Godhead, is also common to many persons, for being found in construction, and accompanied with adjuncts restraining its signification, it necessarily ceases to be proper. Thus, we read: "The Jehovah of hosts." And R. Abraham ben Ezra, confesses, that when thus placed in regimen with the term hosts, it partakes of the nature of a common appellation." But, besides being found in construction, and having other marks of a noun common, it is absolutely equivocal; angels being called by this name, as well as the Deity. Nor is this any modern opinion of the Jews, on the contrary, it was the generally received notion of the ancient Jewish Fathers, as appears from what is recorded of R. Simeon ben Lakis, who was wont

to maintain it on Scriptural authority. Finally, not only the angels, but even the Messiah, the Saints, and the city of Jerusalem, are called by this title of Jehovah. The fact is thus attested by R. Moses Alsheah: "Behold our Rabbis of blessed memory, on the authority of R. Samuel Nachmanides, assert, that there are three things which are called by the name of Jehovah, the Saints, the Messiah, and the city of Jerusalem."*

Thus, adds Oxlee, the most sacred appellations of the divinity being proved to be common and equivocal, furnish an argument which tends strongly to establish the leading position, in that it makes for the pluri-personality of the Godhead, according to the Trinitarian hypothesis.

The question, therefore, we again say, is not about such secondary, derivative, analogous and metaphorical applications of this title of God, but about the proper, primary, and direct signification of the word *elohim*.

The fact which principally requires our attention, is the constant use of *Elohim* to designate the one and only God, and this in the language of the patriarchs and prophets, who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Is it not, we may well say, a little remarkable that, in the sacred books of Israel, books whose very words, in many cases at least, were selected and dictated by the inspiration of Jehovah, the ordinary name and style of the Only Living and True God, should be in a plural form? Did some strange and insuperable necessity lie in the way? Was the language so poor that it could furnish no other term? or, if so, could not the wisdom of inspiration have suggested a new appellative, and have forever abolished the hazardous word? None of these reasons existed. The language was rich and copious. The names of the Deity in general and constant use were, as we have already remarked, more numerous than in either of the beautiful languages of classical antiquity, or in the most cultivated tongues of modern Europe.

The ancient Israelites always affirmed that a plurality

* See in Oxlee, vol. i., pp. 74, 75-78, where quotations from Jewish authorities are given at length.

is indubitably understood in the Deity. This plainly appears from what Philo says on the terms "τοῦ ποιησάμεν," (*πλῆθος ἀμφοινοντος*)—and "το ὡς εἰς ἡμῶν," (*οὐκ ἑνός, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πλείονων, εἶδεται.*) The expression, "Let us make," manifests a plurality;—the expression, "As one of us," is put to signify, not one, but many.—Phiol. ed., Mangey, tom. i, pp. 430, 431. This and the like affirmations of truth, seem to have very greatly perplexed the Jews of the middle ages who were very hostile to Christianity and Christian doctrine. Their perplexities appear by their having been so hard pushed as to invent many a childish story. We will only quote one. "Rabbi Samuel bar Nachman said that Moses, when in writing the Law he was come to the place where he was by divine dictation to write, "Let us make man," paused, and replied to God, "Lord of the world, why dost thou afford an occasion for error, with respect to thy most simple unity?" But that the Lord answered, "Moses, write thou so; and he that desires to err, let him err."—Bereshith Rabba, ap. M. ben Israelis Concil., in Gen. qu. vi." That the Jews of the middle ages, do not stand alone in error on this most important point, appears very evident from the many theories invented, in order to explain this use of plural titles for the Deity. Some have gone so far as to say that the term was originally employed by polytheists and literally expressed a plurality of divine beings. But this is historically false, and it is also unsupposable that when the Israelites came to abominate Idolatry, and to treat it as high treason, they would employ as a frequent name of God, one which was polytheistic and pagan.

This notion was advanced by R. Judah Levita, and others spoken of by Abarbinel, who holds this notion as perfectly inadmissible; for, says he, it would follow of necessity, that the language of the Scriptures is the language of Idolatry, and that the worship of images was the primeval religion. His concluding remark upon this subject is worthy of attention. "This account of the Rabbi, says Abarbinel, is, in fact, more inexplicable and unintelligible, than that of any other writer, who has handled the subject, besides himself."

The Rabbins, generally, explain this as an honorary

and complimentary form of speech,—a plural of majesty. But this is a mere subterfuge. “For,” says Ewald, “It is a great error to suppose that the Hebrew language, as we find it, has any feeling for a so-called ‘pluralis majestaticus.’” “The instances” says Pye Smith, from which this opinion is inferred, are extremely few, and they all refer to such kinds of ownership as are a burlesque on all ideas of dignity and majesty.” Every candid mind examining the paucity and dubious character of the examples by which it is conceived to be sustained, and their feeble claim to the notion of “dominion or dignity;” the non occurring of the same, in names and titles of honour which occur in the language, such as those which denote kings, princes, nobles, generals, priests and prophets, will certainly find not one instance of this pretended notation of dignity, since it can never be imagined that such an indication of majesty, exalted dignity, and most excellent honour, should be conferred upon the owner of an ass, and denied to the sovereign of a kingdom. The question, therefore, we again say, is why this form of speech in any case, and especially in the frequent title of God, should first originate with the ancient Hebrews? No reader, says Oxlee, who is tolerably conversant in the Hebrew Scriptures, will be so bold as to assert that this is an idiom of the inspired penmen. It is, indeed, a most unsatisfactory way of accounting for the plurals in question. So it did appear even to R. Abraham who, being hard pushed, was glad to subjoin another reason. His reason, however, was most ably confuted by Abarbinel, whose words are as follows: “But truly R. Abraham’s statement respecting the term *Elohim*; that it is used in the plural form by way of honour, is, in my opinion, without the least colour of truth or probability; as we find it in the plural number predicated of things, which God expressly forbids to be honoured. Much less is it true, with regard to any language, in which it is customary to address a superior in the plural by way of reverence; as is the case in languages of Europe. For it happens only when they speak to a superior in the second person, that they apply to him the plural form, as though he were equal to many single ones in his

stead. But, in subjects of the third person, should they chance to mention a superior, they do not speak of him in the plural number. Besides; if plurality of number in a name of the Deity were to add honour to that name, why do not we find it in some other of his names, as well as in Elohim? Moreover, with respect to the position, that God is called Elohim, in the plural, on account of his work having been performed by the instrumentality of angels, that likewise is destitute of all probabilities. For, from this it would follow of necessity, that the Elohim, which is used in the first verse of the book of Genesis, is meant of the angels, which would be in the highest degree erroneous, as the primary creation originated solely from the first cause, without any instrumentality, and not from the angels, who were themselves, but a part of the general creation."

We may also add, that it is very absurd to think that God should borrow his way of speaking from a king, before a man was created upon the earth! And even granting this to be possible, yet the cases will not agree. For though a King or Governor may say *us* and *we*, there is certainly no figure of speech that will allow any single person to say *one of us*, when he speaks of *himself*. It is a phrase that can have no meaning, unless there be more persons than one to speak out of.

Such an opinion is also expressly contradicted by Scripture, since it is written, "who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?"—Rom. xi: 34; Is. xl: 13.

Many feeling the force of the prophet's declaration, were forced to invent other notions; for instance, R. Solomon, boldly affirms that the plural noun, by being associated with verbs and adjuncts in the singular number, is divested of its plural import. But such fallacy can be entitled to no regard. For, in Greek, a noun of the neuter plural is usually associated with a verb singular, and yet, no scholar would contend, that because the verb is of the singular number, the noun does not actually express a plurality of subsistencies. And, it is by no means the fact, that the plural term, Elohim, when used for the true God, is accompanied with verbs and other adjuncts always, in the singular number. The ac-

count which the patriarch gives of his being induced to leave home, the solemn attestation of Joshua in his address to the Israelites, the exclamation of the Philistines on beholding the ark of Jehovah, the solicitation of the children of Israel to supply the vacancy of Moses by the symbol of a calf, together with their subsequent declaration respecting its divinity, not to mention many other instances, do certify the contrary.

Again, R. M. Gerundensis, would have the term Elohim, deduced from *El*, God, and *hem*, they; supposing it to comprehend in its signification all spiritual powers and virtues, whatever, originating from the Deity, and has defined it, as if it were written,—*MeEl hem*,—they exist from God. Abarbinel's objection to this is so clear and strong, that I will quote it verbatim: "R. M. G. assigns no reason for the omission of the *Mem*, in the beginning, so necessary to the sense which is here affixed to it; nor why the *God*, contrary to all propriety, should be inserted in the middle, and still less reason, why in every case of affixation it should be treated as a plural." "This notion, moreover, is repugnant to the authority of the Masorites, who, by placing the *Holem* point to direct the pronunciation, clearly manifest the opinion of antiquity, that Elohim was written defectively for Eloahim, the plural form of Eloaha, the Deity.

Abarbinel also, to avoid if possible, the belief of a plurality in the Deity, tries to say that the term Elohim, is a compound of *El* and *Jah*, signifying the God Jah; and so urges by way of recommending the hypothesis, that nothing will be found to have been created without the express mention and agency of this Jah. He instances Ephraim, Metsraim, Chilaim, and Chushim, as proofs, that the termination, *im*, does not, necessarily, signify many, and regards the *Mem* as added, in the present case, to distinguish the absolute from the construct form. But, this is, indeed, a specimen of reasoning quite unworthy of the great Abarbinel. There is, in the first place, a strange and unprecedented transposition of the two letters, *He* and *Jod*; in order to form from *El*, *Jah*, the term Elohi; as the author proposes. Besides, the instances here adduced, are, by no means, in point; being all of them proper names, and never

used either with an affix or an emphasis, like the noun Elohim. Neither has he assigned any reason, why this alone, of all the names of the Supreme Being, should be accompanied sometimes with verbs and adjectives in the plural number. The most evident cause of complaint, however, is, that, contrary to the established usage of the language, he derives, by the addition of a *Mem*, a singular absolute from a singular construct form.

Indeed, the author himself appears to be dissatisfied with his own opinion; and, as though he foresaw that it would not carry conviction to the mind of the reader, has endeavoured to account for this plurality in another way, by comparing the Deity with the soul of man, in respect of the number and variety of its operations. But here the wonted perspicacity of the author has again deserted him. For though it be very true, that we observe resulting from the self same mind of man a variety of actions and operations, without ever calling in question the singularity of its number; yet does that add nothing to the support of his argument, because in no language with which we are acquainted, is the human mind ever expressed in the plural number on that account, and, therefore, affords no reason why the noun Elohim, should be so used, on account of the multiplicity and variety of its operations.

It remains, then, that we contemplate this appellation of the Deity as being actually in the plural number, agreeably to both grammar and analogy; and as expressing a number of persons in that Godhead, to which it is rightly and for the most part appropriated.

This opinion was unquestioned in the Christian Church until the time of Calvin, when it was only partially, and for a short time, interrupted by the opposition of himself, Mercer, Pareus, Drusius, Bellarmine, &c. &c.

It is further observable that the Rabbinical writers, even while supporting their alleged rule, recognize a designed plurality in the name Elohim, and say that it is expressive of the manifold faculties or operations of the Deity. "*Elohim*: its explanation is *Possessor of all powers*: and for this reason he, (Moses,) does not say *El*, nor *Elohah*, but *Elohim*, in the plural number. So also, *He is the Holy God*, (Elohim Kedoshism,) because

he perfectly comprises all holinesses." This is the opinion also, of the ancient Jewish author of the book *Cosri*, quoted by Hengstenberg, vol. i., pp. 216, 217. The opposition, however, both of Calvin and others, to this view of the word, was made to the idea that the word Elohim, in and of itself, expressed the idea of the Trinity. But even these writers admit that it is itself plural, and that it indicates the plurality of the Divine Nature, and is absolutely inconsistent with the Unitarian and modern Jewish theory of God, being personally, metaphysically, and only one.

Thus to quote only the most learned Buxtorf who, though in his disquisition on this subject, takes great pains to support the negative opinion with Calvin and others, yet, at the close, he acknowledges nearly, if not altogether, the opinion here supported. His words are as follows; "Not that I think that this argument should be altogether rejected among Christians, for, upon the same principle on which not a few of the Jews, as we have seen, refer this emphatical application of the plural number to a plurality of powers, or of influences, or of operations, that is, *ad extra*; why may not we refer it *ad intra*, to a plurality of persons, and to personal works? Yea, who certainly knows *what* that was which the ancient Jews understood by this plurality of powers and faculties?"—Buxtorf, fil. Dissert. Philolog. Theolog. Diss. v., pp. 244. Philo has, also, expressed himself in full accordance with this view of the case. See Philo, ed., Mangey, tom. i., pp. 430, 431.

This word, says Ewald, "appears to have remained always in the plural even in prose, not so much on account of its resemblance to the idea of *Lord*, as because they conceived the Deity in ancient times as infinitely numerous, and yet as conjoined. "Ewald's Heb. Gram. by Nicholson, pp. 231. Neither is this inconsistent with the theory supported with so much learning by Hengstenberg and Havernick, that Elohim is used only to distinguish God in his fulness of power, without reference to his personality or moral qualities, to any special relation in which he stands to men, either as to the benefits he bestows, or to the requirements he makes, and that Jehovah is employed to denote God as person-

ally revealed, manifested, and in covenant with man. For Hengstenberg admits that "the one God comprehends multiplicity in himself. Thus he can oppose to the "*we* will build," "*we* will make," of *men* who trust in their numbers and combination, *his own* "*we* will go down." "*We* will confound." The ancient Jews approached to a correct explanation of the plural? This view is very strongly supported by Theodoret, who advocates the allusion to the Trinity.

Even Hengstenberg, in reference to the views taken by Calvin, &c., on this subject, says, "It is not to be denied that this erroneous view involves a portion of truth. The plural form, as it indicates the infinite riches, the inexhaustible fulness of the Godhead, serves to combat the most dangerous enemy of the doctrine of the Trinity, that abstract monotheism of which Schelling, (*über die Gottheiten von Samothrace*, pp. 87,) admirably says, "Mohammedanism may indeed be called monotheism, which only allows one personality or one simple power to the name of God. That this is not in the style of the New Testament, requires no proof; that this is not agreeable to the old Testament, see *Weltalter*, Th. i., "Since *Elohim* is opposed to this view, which, in many respects, stands below polytheism, it contains certainly the germ of the doctrine of the Trinity."—Hengstenberg, vol. i., pp. 268, 269, note.

It is, indeed, affirmed as by Mr. Belsham, that "in all languages it is a common anomaly for words of a plural form to have a singular signification." But he has not produced any instance, and I apprehend that it would not be easy to find one that would prove unexceptionable. Mr. Belsham further says, that "the word *Elohim* is almost used uniformly in apposition with singular verbs." This is a part of the very case to be accounted for. "It is not so," says Dr. Smith, with the "words of a plural form," in other languages, which the author says "have a singular signification;" they are always put in apposition with plural attributives. But, if we content ourselves with regarding the apposition of *Elohim* with singular verbs, adjectives, and pronouns, as a Hebrew idiom of which no other account can be given than that so we find it, what can we say upon the other

part of the case, the construction with *plural* attributives? It is *this* which forms the great peculiarity of our question, it is *this*, upon which the chief stress of the argument is laid for an allusion or implication in favour of the doctrine of a Divine plurality, but upon *this* the writer was silent!"

Mr. Belsham further says, that "Elohim is not limited, like Jehovah, to express the Supreme Being alone." "For that very reason, then, it became the more necessary to guard against possible and probable abuse. As the word was in ordinary use to designate the numerous false deities of the nations, it was the *more* likely, and even unavoidable, that the Hebrews would understand its perpetual occurrence in the plural form, as the designation of their own God, to be an express intimation that *plurality* in some sense belonged to *Him*; while, from other infallible testimonies, they were absolutely certain of his essential unity."

Once more, Mr. Belsham affirms that, "though Elohim is in a plural form, it commonly expresses one object only."

But, after carefully examining the examples brought by Mr. B. to support his assertion, we will only say with Dr. Pye Smith, that they are all irrelevant.

To bring this review to an end, we remark, in the words of Dr. Pye Smith, "We have thus endeavoured to present a faithful view of the whole evidence on both sides of this celebrated question. After the closest attention that I can give to all the parts of the case, the impression on my mind is favourable to the opinion that this peculiarity of idiom *originated* in a design to *intimate* a plurality in the nature of the one God; and that thus, in connexion with other circumstances calculated to suggest the same conception, it was intended to excite and prepare the minds of men for the more full declaration of this unsearchable mystery, which should in proper time be granted. This supposition implies, of course, a divine direction in the origin, or in the application of the term, and the intention which we suppose was merely to *intimate*, not to give an absolute declaration. Now, we know that the earlier dispensations of revealed knowledge were constructed upon the

plan of a course of *intimations*, (as it were involucra,) with regard to a variety of truths, the clear manifestation of which was reserved for the brightness of the Gospel day. Under such a system, it would be a necessary consequence that the design would be perceived, and the interior meaning apprehended, in various degrees, according to the piety, intelligence, and attention of different persons; and, in all probability, the careless majority would pay no attention at all to such subjects."

To this, we will only add the testimony of Gussenius, in his *Commentarii Linguae Ebraicae*. "From these considerations it follows, that the plural form of speech concerning God, is to be taken strictly and in its full force, if we would comply with the idiom of the Hebrew tongue; and that therefore, it ought to be acknowledged, that by this phraseology, plurality in Deity is most distinctly and strongly affirmed." In the same connexion, he also expresses himself in the following remarkable words: "But you will say, this plurality is inconsistent with the nature of God; I ask, in return, how do you know that? The declaration of God, *who knows*, is of more weight than your reasoning, *who do not know*. There are other causes, you retort, of a plural form of speech. I answer, its proper and natural cause is plurality in the things signified. It is from *this* that the plural form of a noun usually arises; nor could it have been indicated in a manner more effectual than by this description of phrase, at once elegant and consistent with use. Let every humble learner, therefore, of the word of God, settle in his mind, to receive, in sincerity and truth, whatever he (God) may dictate."

See a long note on the subject, in Wardlaw's *Socinian Controversy*, pp. 488, and note D, Gale's *Court of the Gentiles*, vol. 4, ch. 3, p. 237. Also, Amyraldus *Probatio Trinitatis ex V. T.* in Wagenselii *Telae Ignæ Satanæ*, pp. 141, 165.