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ARTICLE I.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, NOT THEORETICAL OR SPECULATIVE, BUT PRACTICAL IN ITS NATURE, AND FUNDAMENTAL IN ITS IMPORTANCE.

In our previous article on the doctrine of the Trinity, we laid it down that this was a question plainly above and beyond the capacity and limits of the human mind, and altogether incomprehensible, undiscoverable, and indeterminable, by the human reason. It is purely a question of revelation; and the only proper inquiry respecting it is, whether, how far, and for what purposes, it is revealed. To say it is impossible for God to exist as a Trinity in Unity, is, therefore, contrary to reason; which has no premises from whence to conclude one way or the other: and to say, that the doctrine of the Trinity is contradictory, is to contradict the very term Trinity itself, which affirms that in God there is a unity of such an infinite and unfathomable nature, as to admit and require a trinity, and a trinity which can only co-exist in a unity.

"When," says Milton, whom Unitarians so proudly and yet so deceitfully appeal to as a Unitarian, in the posthumous work on Christian Doctrine attributed to him,* "when we speak of knowing God, it must be understood with reference to the imperfect comprehension of man; for to know God as he really is, far transcends the powers of man's thoughts, much more of his percep-

* Vol. i., page 19, Treatise on Christian Doctrine, supposing this to be Milton's.

tion." "Our safest way," he adds,* "is to form in our minds such a conception of God, as shall correspond with his own delineation and representation of himself in the sacred writings. For, granting that both in the literal and figurative descriptions of God, he is exhibited, not as he really is, but in such a manner as may be in the scope of our comprehensions, yet we ought to entertain such a conception of him, as he, in condescending to accommodate himself to our capacities, has shown that he desires we should conceive. For it is on this very account that he has lowered himself to our level, lest in our flights above the reach of human understanding, and beyond the written word of Scripture, we should be tempted to indulge in vague cogitations and subtleties."

"Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid:
 Leave them to God above; him serve and fear.
 * * * * * Heaven is for thee too high,
 To know what passes there; so, lowly wise,
 Think only, what concerns thee, and thy being;
 Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there
 Live, in what state, condition, or degree."

"We may be sure," adds Milton, "that sufficient care has been taken that the Holy Scriptures should *contain nothing* unsuitable to the character or dignity of God, and that God should say nothing of himself which could derogate from his own majesty." "To speak summarily, God either is, or is not, such as he represents himself to be. If he be really such, why should we think otherwise of him? If he be not such, on what authority do we say what *God* has not said?"†

If then, the triune nature of the divine Unity of the Godhead is the doctrine of Scripture, the term Trinity is, undoubtedly, necessary to express it so long as there is opposition made to the doctrine itself. And if the doctrine is not found in Scripture, then both the doctrine and the term should be rejected. And hence we were led to expose the unreasonableness of objections levelled against the word "trinity," a term which is only designed to express in *one* word, the doctrine which would

* Vol. i., p. 20. † Vol. i., p. 25.

otherwise, and that constantly, require many words for its expression.

But it is further objected that this doctrine, even if true, is not of practical importance,—that it is merely speculative, theoretical and theological,—and that it ought not therefore, to be represented as of fundamental importance, and its rejection as heretical and dangerous. This objection, if valid, would certainly be a clear justification of silence on our part, and of objection on the part of its opponents. But how are we to know what is practical, and fundamentally important in revealed religion? Not assuredly by our opinion of it, or by the opinion of any other man, or of any set of men, or of human reason in any form; and for this simple reason, that the system of revealed truth is revealed *only* because it is that about which *human* reason could discover, understand, and judge nothing, except so far as it is revealed. He who reveals the truth must therefore, reveal also, the relative importance of the truth in its bearing upon God's glory and man's salvation, the only ends for which a revelation was given at all.

The importance of any truth in the Bible must, then, be ascertained not by the opinion man forms of it, but from its own nature,—and from the place it holds in the chain of Scriptural principles, promises, precepts, worship and experience. The relation in which any truth stands to God as a Saviour, and to man as a sinner,—to Heaven as lost and to be regained,—to hell endangered,—and to death inevitable—this will stamp it as of primary, or as only of relative importance.

Now, it is very evident, that I may have little knowledge of any truth, or have erroneous conception of it, or misconceive its supreme importance, while another person may have full knowledge and adequate conceptions of it. And in such a case it is not only *lawful* for that individual, but it is surely his *duty*, to use all proper means to convince me and to convert me to the knowledge and enjoyment of a truth which he knows, by experience, to be very precious to his own soul. This is what we are required to do by the spirit of natural charity, and also, by Divine precept, which enjoins upon

us that "in meekness we should instruct those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

Truths, which even Unitarians acknowledge to be of primary and fundamental importance, are, nevertheless, matters of controversy between Christians and Jews, and between Christians and infidels. The denial of these truths cannot, therefore, be attributed to any want of practical importance in them, nor to the want of sufficient evidence in the revelation made of them; but to a culpable condition of the minds of those who reject them, and who as the Scriptures declare, "are blinded through unbelief."

Neither does the importance of a doctrine depend upon the degree of certainty with which, to our own mind, it may seem to be proved.

Whatever may be my individual opinion of any doctrine, either as to its certainty or its importance, affects not its reality. Its certainty depends on the fact that it is proved by sufficient evidence to be delivered in the word of God; and its importance, upon its own intrinsic character and the relation in which it stands to other doctrines, and to the duty which we owe to God and to ourselves; and hence it follows that a man through ignorance, or prejudice, or partial examination, may regard as doubtful or unimportant, a doctrine which is nevertheless taught clearly, and which is of the most vital importance.

To those, therefore, to whom the doctrine is thus clear and fundamental, its reception and advocacy assume a character of paramount necessity. It will be held by such with unyielding tenacity; and it will be urged by them upon others with a zeal and earnestness which are neither the result of vanity, pride, uncharitable contempt, or any disposition to intolerance, but which sprung solely from the very necessity of christian fidelity and love.

But, it is alleged, that a man who rejects as untrue, opinions which we consider both true and essential to salvation, and who does so in sincerity of heart, cannot be blameable. Now, undoubtedly, sincerity and per-

sonal conviction are both necessary to make even an opinion in itself right, to be right and valuable to me, since to use the words of Dryden :*

"If others in the same glass better see,
'Tis for themselves they look, but not for me,
For my salvation must its doom receive,
Not from what others, but what I believe.

Or, as another poet has expressed it,

Who with another's eye can read,
Or worship by another's creed?
Trusting thy grace, we form our own,
And bow to thy commands alone.

But, it is also true, that a man's perfect sincerity of heart in holding any opinion free from any sinful bias and prejudice of mind, is what he himself, from the very nature of the case, is incapable of avouching, and what no human being can determine for him. God alone can judge the real character and condition of a heart which is "deceitful above all things."

All-seeing God! 'tis thine to know
The springs whence wrong opinions flow:
To judge, from principles within,
When frailty errs, and when we sin.

And since it is common for all who hold dangerous errors to claim sincerity in doing so, it is only when we have the testimony of God's Word and Spirit, "witnessing with ours," that we can safely rejoice in "the testimony of a good conscience." In other words, our hearts must be judged by the Scriptures, and not the Scriptures by our hearts.

Besides, we may be *sincere* and yet ignorant, uninformed, and so blinded by prejudice as to be incapable of "receiving the truth in the love of it;" and while Christ as God, "knows how to have compassion on the ignorant and those that are out of the way," yet our ignorance cannot make that truth unimportant, which is vital, nor that error venial which is "damnable."

Now, the doctrine of the Trinity must either be a "damnable heresy," or the wilful rejection of it must be

* Vol. I., p. 404.

so. It lies at the foundation of our religion. It shapes our conceptions of the God we are to worship, and the worship with which we are to approach him. It makes God absolutely and personally one, or necessarily Triune. It makes the Son and the Holy Ghost either attributes, or creatures, or, on the other hand, very God of very God, co-equal persons in a triune Jehovah. It makes these persons in the Godhead either finite or infinite, created or uncreated, necessary or contingent, supreme or subordinate, objects of present worship, or only objects of reverential regard for past services. If the Son and the Holy Ghost are not God in unity with the Father, it must be blasphemous and highly displeasing both to him and to them, to worship them as such. And if, on the other hand, they are really divine, and co-equal with the Father, then, whatever we may say of them, however in *words* we may exalt and praise them, if we withhold from them our prayers and worship as God, we rob them of their highest excellence and glory. The doctrine of the Trinity, therefore, determines the object of our worship. Abandon the doctrine of the Trinity, which presents as the object of our worship an infinite, eternal, omnipotent, and omnipresent Being, in existence, nature, or Godhead one, and yet subsisting (in a way unintelligible to finite minds and not necessary to be understood,) in three persons as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and what is the object to be worshipped by us? Do Unitarians know any more than we do what God is, or what God possibly can be? Can they define what is the unity of God? Can they possibly reconcile with their notions of the Divine unity the entire representation made in Scripture of God, and of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost? Or, have they any one theory of the supreme object of worship to present to our acceptance as that on which they are themselves agreed?*

A large body of those ranked among Unitarians at the present time, rejecting the authority of Scripture as an infallible guide to our knowledge of God, abandon also any definite or personal object of worship. Others, again, regard Christ as a Divine being, as in

* See Note A, at end of the article.

some sense God, and as such to be worshipped. And as the former party are pantheistic atheists, the latter are as certainly Dualists, since in reality they worship, not ONE God, but two Gods. Christ they regard as having been exalted to the honor and dignity of a God, not, indeed, so as to be either one with, or equal to the supreme God. But, still, he is *deus verus*, truly Divine and only second and subordinate to the Father, by whom he was created and from whom he received all that he possesses. Socinus therefore, regarded as a calumny the imputation of not believing Christ to be true God, and as such entitled to be worshipped with Divine honor. He denominates Christ *true God*, and other Unitarians of his day, speak of Christ as *deus eximius*, the *most exalted* or *eminent* God, and not to acknowledge him as a true God is, says Smalcus, to renounce the Christian religion. Though not the supreme God, Christ, as Milton teaches, or the author of the Work on Christian Doctrine lately discovered and ascribed to him, is God by appointment, by office, by communicated Divine power, wisdom, goodness, and authority,—*deus factus non natus*.* Such of the Unitarians as hold this opinion, which all the ancient Arians did, instead of believing in one God, believe, undoubtedly, in two Gods, and “one who is God by nature, and the other by grace, one supreme and another inferior, one greater and the other lesser, one elder and eternal, and the other junior and modern,” the one necessarily God and the other Divine only arbitrarily, contingently, and by the will of the other. According to this opinion, there might be a true God without the Godhead, a Divine person who is the object of worship, without a Divine nature,—all the attributes of Deity without that essence in which alone they can inhere,—a finite creature might become capable of infinite perfections, and what is *peculiar* to God may be made the property of a creature, who may receive what cannot be bestowed, and participate of what is incommunicable.

Such are the absurdities to which the rejection of the

* See other authorities given by Dr. Edwards in his *Preservativ Agt. Socinianism*, part 1, pp. 9, 10, and *Waterland*, vol. i., part 2, and Index to it.

doctrine of the Trinity of persons in one supreme Godhead, has led many, in modern, as well as in ancient times. And where the Holy Spirit is regarded, as by the ancient Arians he was considered, as a Divine person equally, though in an inferior degree, with the Son, these absurdities are increased by the multiplication of three Gods, a doctrine which some have even boldly avowed and defended.*

"I do not pretend," says Waterland,† "that you Unitarians, are Tritheists, in every sense; but I do affirm that you are Tritheists in the same sense that the Pagans are called Polytheists, and in the Scripture sense of the word God, as explained and contended for by yourselves. One Divine person is, with you, equivalent to one God; and two, to two Gods, and three, to three Gods; the case is plain; the consequences unavoidable. For one supreme and two inferior Gods, is your avowed doctrine, and certainly, the asserting three Gods, whether co-ordinate or otherwise, is Tritheism; against the first commandment, and against the whole tenor of Scripture and the principles of the primitive church. It is, to me, an instance of the ill-effects of vain philosophy, and shows how the "disputer of this world" may get the better of the Christian; when men appear so much afraid of an imaginary error that in any sense, even in Deity, there can be one nature and three subsistences in that nature, in metaphysics, and to avoid it, run into a real one, alike condemned by Scripture and antiquity."‡

But this theory of two, or three Gods, one supreme and the others created, is not only as has been seen, absurd. It is plainly idolatrous, since divine worship, according to Scripture, can be given to that one divine nature or Godhead, to which appertains all divine perfections, and not to a factitious, fictitious, and finite being. It might be further shown, that the abandonment of the doctrine of the Trinity, has led to the perversion of every attribute of God, as portrayed in Scripture, and that on this account also, the Trinitarian and the Unitarian

* See proof in Edwards, as above.

† Works, Vol. i, pp. 238, 241, who also gives and writes against the advocates of this opinion.

‡ See Note B, at end of this article.

systems conduct us to an object of worship essentially different and distinct. As Trinitarians interpret Scripture, God is infinite, while Unitarians say he is finite. Our God is omnipresent, theirs limited and confined to a certain place; our God is immutable, theirs is liable to change. Our God is naturally just, theirs contingently so: Our God is governor of the world, taking care, oversight of, and interest in, human affairs; theirs like the Deity of Epicurus, sits at ease in the enjoyment of his own happiness, leaving the world to the conduct of chance, and men to the guidance of that which is equally uncertain, their own giddy and unstable passions; neither giving them laws for the regulation of their actions, nor assigning any punishment for the violation of his laws. Our God is omniscient, theirs ignorant of future and contingent events. Our God is without parts or passions, theirs compounded of the one, and liable to the other; even to those which argue the greatest weakness and infirmity, and which some even of the philosophers, thought inconsistent with the bravery and resolution of a wise and virtuous man. It will, therefore, appear, we think, very evident, that the object of their worship and ours is different, and this will as clearly prove that the Religions represented by* the Trinitarian and Unitarian systems are also different.

But the doctrine of the Trinity affects also the *manner* of our worship,—whether it shall be through the intercession and merits of a Mediator, and by the guidance and assistance of a Holy Spirit helping our infirmities, or, directly and in our own name,—whether we shall approach God, looking for acceptance through the work and righteousness of a vicarious and Divine Redeemer, and a Divine Sanctifier, or through works of repentance, prayer and praise, which our own hands and hearts have wrought. This doctrine affects therefore, every duty comprised in our obedience to God, and every hope of finding salvation at the hands of a God infinitely holy to condemn sin, infinitely just to punish it, and who will render to every man according to the deeds done in the

* See Edwards on Socinianism, pp. 68, 69. See also, proof to the same effect, in Smith's Testimony to the Messiah, vol. i, pp. 140-146, given as Note B.

body, whether they have been good or evil. It comes home therefore, to "the business and bosom" of every man, and affects every inquiry pertaining to his everlasting welfare.

The triune God in covenant for man's salvation is the basis and the only foundation laid in Zion for the restoration and re-union of fallen man with his offended God. And it is only through Christ any man can "have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

The whole scheme of revelation centres on the interposition of Christ for the salvation of men. The law was but the preparation for the Gospel, "the school-master to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." The ceremonies and sacrifices of the law were typical of, and superseded by, the sacrifice of Christ, and the more spiritual and exalted system of Christian faith and Christian perfection. "The spirit of prophecy was to bear testimony to Jesus." "God," says St. Paul, "who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by his prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also, he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

The whole efficacy of redemption is also, ascribed to the eternal existence and intercession of the Redeemer: "Christ, says the Apostle, "is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And again, "Now once in the end of the world, hath he, (even Christ,) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Nor is this the teaching of the Apostle Paul, only; it is the teaching also, of the other Apostles.* Now, it is

* See Acts iv, 9-12; John iv, 14; Jude, 18-21.

impossible to believe that this efficacy of redemption, and this universal and exclusive power over the salvation of man, should be ascribed to one who was, as many Unitarians teach, a mere man, who had no existence himself before his human birth, and as all Unitarians must believe, has no agency or influence on his followers, subsequent to the hour of his ascension. Neither is it conceivable that by the whole teaching of Scripture, our acceptance with God and salvation from his wrath and curse should be made to depend upon the agency of a being who was himself, a creature like ourselves. No: is only reconcileable with the idea of Christ being not ONLY MAN, BUT GOD; God manifest in the flesh, who, having formed man after his own image, when that image was defaced by sin, came to restore it; who, having created man for happiness and immortality, when that immortality and happiness were forfeited by disobedience, came to rescue the works of his own hands from hopeless misery and eternal death. This only can render such power, and glory, and dominion, as the Scriptures ascribe to Christ, consistent with the dictates of reason and the feelings of piety. This only can account for that great degree of gratitude and exultation, of confidence and obedience, which the Scriptures declare are due to the Redeemer; affections of which it is impossible to conceive any being should be the legitimate object, in such a degree and to such an extent, except God himself.* With what earnestness of affection, and what assurance of his full power to relieve, does Christ encourage the contrite soul; "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest:" and again, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost:" And above all, at his last solemn converse with his Apostles, to prepare them for his sufferings, with what confidence does he assure them of their final triumph and their eternal happiness; with what exuberance of affection and mercy does he provide for the salvation of every true believer in every climate and

* John xiv: 1; Matt. xxiii: 9, 10; Matt. xi: 27; Luke xii: 8, 9; Matt. x: 15; Matt. xviii: 6; Matt. xxviii: 18 to 20; Mark xvi: 16; John xi: 25, 26; Luke iv: 18.

period of the globe?*. Thus do we find the Apostles and Evangelists regarding their Lord with gratitude so fervent, submission of the heart so profound, confidence so unbounded, obedience so prompt and universal, as prove they looked up to him as God all-powerful, all-merciful, all-faithful, and all-wise.† Can any words express more strongly the Apostle's estimation of the supreme importance of the Redeemer's interposition, his total dependence for salvation upon faith in Christ, and his anxiety that every other human being should look for salvation only to the same source‡ than those contained in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans? And how triumphantly does he exult in the certain salvation of those who, being sanctified and purified by such faith, receive all the benefits which result from the redemption Christ has wrought: "What, (he asks,) shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, shall he not with him also, freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

The Apostle's mind, thus filled and exalted, by contemplating the blessings of redemption, and the character of our Redeemer, breaks forth into a strain of gratitude the most fervent, and confidence the most joyful and triumphant, that ever glowed within the breast of man.§

With all the Apostles, "*Christ is, as it were, all in all.*" They long to quit the world, and be with Christ. Faith in him is their glory, his example their guide, his word their law, his favour their highest hope, his coming their perpetual theme, his sentence the determination of their eternal destiny. Through him, they look for ac-

* John, xiv: 2, 3, also 13, 14; xii: 32; John, xvi: 33; xvii: 20.

† Philippians, ii: 3 to 11; 2 Corin., viii: 3, 9; Philippians, iii: 7, 8, 9.

‡ Romans viii: 31 to 39.

§ Rom. viii: 31 to end, and see also, 2 James, i: 7, 8; 1 Peter, i: 7 to 12; 1 Peter iii: 22; 2 Peter iv: 14; 2 Peter, i: 1 to 11; iii: 18; 1 John, v: iii: 1 to 6.

ceptance of their prayers, justification before God, aid in trials, consolation in sorrow, support in death, acquittal in judgment, and bliss in Heaven, and to him their obedience is most total and unreserved: "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." On a review of all the testimonies of Scripture let me ask, says Dr. Graves, is it conceivable, that the Apostles could have thus associated Christ with God, as united with him in being the object of such gratitude, such faith, such hope, such triumph; as being the agent united with God in this great work of redemption; and yet have believed, that this Christ was a mere man, "who had no existence before his human birth," "no influence after his death;" whose sufferings in the cause of truth, and whose labours in diffusing it, have been equalled by so many other men, even by some of the Apostles themselves? No, certainly; nothing could have existed or justified such feelings, if Christ had not been of Divine dignity; his sufferings unparalleled in their condescension and their efficacy, and, in a word, if he had not been the Son of God, who was united with the Eternal Father, as Creator and Lord of the universe, the sole author and giver of everlasting life. On this supposition, all the Apostle's feelings are natural, just, and rational: on any other, they are visionary and extravagant; nay, even impious and idolatrous.

On the Socinian scheme, then, it appears, that the last and most perfect part of Divine revelation,—which, in every other view, refines and exalts our ideas of the Divinity; teaches us to worship him in spirit and in truth; trains men to the most pure and perfect virtue, and at once inculcates and exemplifies the most heartfelt and ennobling piety;—would, notwithstanding, *discover an opposite tendency in this leading point, the object of our religious affections*; would, as to these, altogether lower and debase the religious principle, and, in total repugnance to every former revelation, teach men to look up,

* Discourse on the Trinity, from which, we have condensed the previous argument.

as to the bestower of every important blessing, even redemption from eternal misery, not to the great and supreme eternal Father alone, but also to another being who is not God, (as is affirmed,) yet concerning whom we are taught, "that he is the only-begotten Son of God;" "by whom alone we can know God," "or come to God,"—the mediator and intercessor with God for man, by whom we obtain remission of our sins;—"that he is the way and the truth, the life and light of the world;" who is entitled to our most fervent gratitude, our perfect confidence, our unreserved submission;—by faith in whom "we are turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God;"—who is "to appear with the holy angels, on the throne of Divine glory, at the last great day of final judgment, to call from the grave the whole human race, to try the secrets of all hearts, and by his sentence fix the eternal doom of every human being."

On the contrary, the view of the incarnation and divinity of Christ," at once truly God and truly man," the second person in the glorious Trinity, which the Trinitarian doctrine imparts, is most harmoniously connected with the statement which the apostolic writings exhibit of the grand scheme of redemption; of the feelings excited by the view of this scheme, of the affections with which believers should regard the Redeemer, and the honor which is due to him: For does it not instantly follow, that faith and obedience, gratitude and adoration, in the very highest degree, are his unquestionable right? If the penitent soul is certain that the same Jesus, who died for his sins, has also risen for his justification; if he is fully assured, that he is not only Man but God, this faith removes that intolerable burden which presses down the humbled sinner's soul, the load of irrevocable and unpardoned guilt, and calms that terror which would embitter to the heart every thought of the Divinity, the terror of unsatisfied justice, which ought not to remit punishment. Despondence is banished, hope revived, repentance encouraged, exertion animated, devotion kindled, and the heart drawn to God by the warmest gratitude, and the most attractive mercy.

Looking to Jesus, we behold in the Divine Lawgiver,

our unalterable steady friend. In the Divine Judge we behold our all-merciful Redeemer. As man we are sure of his sympathy, as God we are sure of his power; and from both united, we look for our eternal deliverance. The immense gulf, which appeared to divide the creature from his God, is closed, and we are assured of access to the throne of grace, where our Redeemer sits, to hold out the golden sceptre of mercy, that we may touch and live. We are assured our prayers will be heard, for he who is ever present and ever watchful, and "knoweth what we ought to pray for," will assist our prayers. Whatsoever "we ask of him, not doubting, we shall receive." "And wheresoever two or three are gathered together is his name, there is he in the midst of them."

Thus strip the Redeemer of his Divinity, and the whole Gospel scheme would be doubt and darkness, inconsistency and confusion. Admit him to be God and Man, and that Gospel exhibits an object of faith and gratitude, admirably adapted to all the affections and powers, all the wants and weaknesses of human nature; admirably promotive of our reformation and sanctification of our advancement in love to man and love to God, and of the improvement of all the means of grace, the accomplishment of all our hopes of glory.

The argument we have thus pursued in reference to Christ as the second person in the adorable Trinity, and as the meritorious ground and ever-living medium of our acceptance with God and of all spiritual and everlasting good, might also be developed, and with equal force, respecting the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit in order to secure the regeneration, sanctification and comfort of believers.

The doctrine of the Trinity, therefore, affects every truth in the Bible which bears on man's salvation,—the nature, person and work of a Redeemer,—the necessity, nature and way of acceptance with God,—the nature of regeneration, repentance, justification, sanctification and redemption, the principle and motive of all acceptable obedience,—of holiness and hope in life,—of peace and comfort in death, and of everlasting life beyond the grave. It affects also, the nature and necessity of prayer, preaching, and the other means of grace, of the

church and its ordinances, and of living, loving and experimental piety. In short, compared with the truths which the Bible understood, as Trinitarians interpret it, discloses, all other knowledge is vain and worthless; and compared with the hopes it inspires, all other hopes are cold and comfortless.

"The doctrine of the Trinity therefore, is, and must be, a truth of supreme and practical importance. The simple statement of it is—as Dr. Wardlaw remarks—enough to show that it must rank as a *first principle*;—an article of prime importance; a foundation stone in the temple of truth; a star of the very first magnitude in the hemisphere of Christian doctrine. For my own part, I believe it to be even more than this; a kind of central Sun, around which the whole system of Christianity, in all its glory, and in all its harmony, revolves.

"It is very obvious, therefore, that two systems, of which the sentiments, on subjects such as these, are in direct opposition, cannot, with any propriety, be confounded together under one common name. That both should be Christianity is impossible; else Christianity is a term which distinguishes nothing. Viewing the matter abstractly, and without affirming, for the present, what is truth and what is error, this, I think, I may with confidence affirm, that to call schemes so opposite in all their great leading articles by a common appellation, is more absurd, than it would be to confound together those two irreconcilable theories of astronomy, of which the one places the Earth, and the other the Sun, in the centre of the planetary system." They are, in truth, *essentially different religions*. For, if opposite views as to the *object of worship*, the *groundhope for eternity*, the *rule of faith and duty*, and the *principles and motives of true obedience*; if opposite views as to these do not constitute different religions, we may, without much difficulty, discover some principle of union and identity amongst all religions whatever; we may realize the doctrine of Pope's universal prayer; and extend the right hand of fellowship to the worshippers at the Mosque, and to the votaries of Brama. "I unfeignedly account the doctrine of the Trinity," says Richard Baxter, "the sum and kernel of the Christian religion."

What other conclusion can be drawn from that final, authoritative commission given by Christ as the Divine Head of the Church, when about to ascend to that glory which he had with the Father from before the foundation of the world? The evidences and effects of his Divine power had been everywhere displayed. As Head of the Church, ALL power in Heaven and Earth were given unto him. And in the exercise of that power we find Christ making an express profession of faith in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the doctrinal foundation of the Church of God which he had purchased with his own blood, and the form of initiation into its membership.—(Matt. xxviii: 16.)

The very learned Bishop Bull,* in his elaborate work on proof of the fact that the Church of God in the earliest ages considered it essential to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, observes, that his antagonist Episcopius admitted, that the most ancient creed used in the administration of baptism, from the very times of the Apostles, was this—"I believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost;" according to the form prescribed by Jesus himself. Episcopius, it is true, wished to weaken the force of the inference from this form, but the "Bishop in answer, shows that in this creed, brief as it was, the true divinity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is so distinctly asserted, that in so short a form of words, it was scarcely possible it could be more clearly expressed; for first, it is plain, that in this form, "I believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," the word God is referred in common to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, a fact which is still more evident in the original Greek than in the translation. It is most certain that the ancients thus understood this brief confession. † For instance, Tertullian expounding the common faith of Christians, with respect to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, affirms, "The Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and each is God." Cyprian also, in his epistle to Jubajanus, thus argues against the Baptism of Hereticks: "If one can

* *Judicium Eocl. Cath.* Ch. iv.

† This we shall have occasion afterwards to prove.

be baptized by Hereticks, he can obtain the remission of sins; if the remission of sins, he is sanctified and become a temple of God. "I ask, of what God? if of the Creator, it cannot be, for he has not believed on him: if of Christ, how can he be the temple of Christ, who denies that Christ is God? if of the Holy Spirit, since the three are one, how can the Holy Spirit be propitious to him, who is the enemy either of the Father or the Son?" The attentive reader will here also observe, that Cyprian most expressly teaches, that a belief of the real Godhead of our Lord Christ was altogether necessary to salvation, since he declares that "he cannot become the temple of God;" which is the same thing as to say, he cannot be saved who denies that Christ is God. "And to me, continues this learned prelate, it appears, that in these few words, "I believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost," this great truth, even that the Son and Holy Spirit are one God with the Father, is more clearly expressed than in some more full creeds, which were afterwards introduced, in which other additions being made to the words: "I believe in God the Father," and also after the mention of the Son, without repeating the word God in the clauses concerning the Son and the Holy Spirit, it might seem, and did seem to some, that the title God belonged to the Father alone, plainly contrary to the intention and opinion of those who formed these more enlarged creeds. Secondly, in this form, the Son, as well as the Holy Spirit, are united with the Father as partners of his dominion, and sharers of that faith, honor, worship, and obedience, which the person to be baptized vows and promises, and which he who believes can belong to a mere man, or to any creature, must be conceived totally ignorant of what it is which constitutes the horrible guilt of idolatry."

But, in addition to the truth of this great doctrine, this divine commission of our Saviour makes evident what is too often unattended to, and what we now wish to illustrate, the direct practical tendency of the doctrine of the Trinity, since it is connected by him with that scheme of instruction which "teaches men to observe and do all things whatsoever he had commanded." Beyond any reasonable doubt or controversy, the grand peculiar doc-

trine of the Christian Revelation is here declared to be the existence of Three Persons in the Divine essence, forming together the one Godhead, the exclusive object of our adoration and obedience; and in the Divine dispensations towards man, and especially in the grand scheme of redemption, contributing each their distinct parts, which supply distinct grounds of gratitude and reverence to each of these divine persons. This great truth is, therefore, put forward by the founder of our holy religion, the author and finisher of our faith, not as an obscure and unconnected dogma, which may be rejected because mysterious, or disregarded as unessential, but as the great confession of faith, indispensably required from all who seek admission into his church on earth, or hope to be received as his followers in Heaven.

Is it not also evident, from the constant, affectionate, and fervent repetition of this promise in the form of a benediction by the Apostles, that this great truth of the divinity of our Redeemer, and his union with God the Father, is not merely a speculative dogma, necessary indeed, to our entrance into the Church of Christ by baptism, but which may be afterwards neglected, or forgotten; but, that as with the holy apostle, so with us, it should be ever uppermost in our recollection, as a source of faith and hope, of gratitude and love, and adoration to those divine persons, equally united in the Majesty of the Godhead, and also equally united in the work of our salvation? How awful then, is the danger of rejecting those peculiar doctrines of the gospel, which some men think unimportant, because, as they suppose, they have no necessary connexion with the truths or the duties of what they term the religion of reason and nature, and to which exclusively they would confine their regard.

Let no man, therefore, affirm, that the doctrine of the Trinity is merely an abstract dogma, a mode of faith, which has no bearing on practical religion. It is far more scriptural to believe that the practical knowledge and belief of this doctrine, and of the separate office of each person in the Godhead, is necessary for eternal life. "For," says the Apostle, "it is THROUGH CHRIST we both have access BY ONE SPIRIT UNTO THE FATHER." "Through

Christ we are reconciled to God." "No man, says Christ, cometh unto the Father but by me. I am the way." "There is but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." "And this is eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." But to know Christ as God manifest in the flesh ; as a living, loving and all-sufficient Saviour,—to be united to him, as our vital Head, so that our life may be hid with Christ in God,—we must be assisted and taught by the Holy Ghost. "It is the Spirit who searcheth all things, even the deep things of God." It is he that worketh in us "to will and to do." The preparations of the heart are from him. "No man can call Jesus *Lord* but by the Holy Ghost," and it is "the Spirit, who helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." And "as many as are thus led by the Spirit," through the Son unto the Father, "are the sons of God," for through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

But some man may say, that after all, we cannot comprehend this doctrine, nor know anything with certainty about it. This objection, however, is founded upon the evident mistake of confounding the doctrine with that which the doctrine teaches—the *fact*, that there is a triune God with the comprehension of the essence and mode of existence of this trinity,—the abstract term by which we express what is revealed to us of God, with the nature of that incomprehensible trinity, which exists in the one ever-blessed Godhead,—and the clear enunciation of the doctrine in Scripture with a clear understanding of all that it implies.*

How God exists—what is God's nature—and how God can be three and yet one—*this* we cannot comprehend, because God's nature cannot possibly be revealed to us as it is in itself. In this respect, however, not only the tri-unity, but all that relates to God, is both ineffable and incomprehensible,—all that relates to the self-existence, eternity, omnipresence, omnipotence and omni-

* See Note A, at end of this article, from Waterland's Works, vol. v., pp. 18-17.

science of God, to his holiness, justice, goodness and mercy, and to all these in combination of harmony with each other. In this respect, also, all that is supernatural is high and inconceivable to us. And of the essence and mode of existence and operation of every object in nature, we are as really ignorant as we are of the Divine essence.

While, therefore, it is true of God, that his nature is incomprehensible, this is not any more true of the trinity of God, than it is of the existence and attributes of God. We know nothing of any of these as they are in their own nature. But we can, and do know certainly and infallibly all that is revealed to us by God, concerning himself in his word. We do know certainly, that God best understood how, and in what language, to convey us to that knowledge of himself as it relates to his nature and attributes, which was comprehensible by us, and which might become the proper foundation for our faith, humility, adoration and pious resignation. We do know assuredly, that God cannot mistake, and that he cannot deceive, or lead us into mistake. In causing "holy men of God, therefore, to speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," we must be, and we are, perfectly sure, that God caused the best language to be employed in speaking of himself, which could be done. And when we properly understand that language, and attach to it all the meaning, and only that meaning which it conveys to us, we are sure that our understanding of what God is in his nature and perfections, is certainly and infallibly correct, although, of necessity, it is still very imperfect and far short of what God really is, and of what is understood of him by angels and by the spirits of just men made perfect, who now "see him as he is."

The manner of the existence of the Trinity is, then, we admit, a mystery; but that God is in nature only one, and in persons three, is a reality, a fact of whose certainty we are assured by God himself in his own word. The case is exactly the same with every attribute of God. "The manner of their existence is above comprehension," as is stated even by Dr. Clarke,* and yet their ex-

* Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 99.

istence and reality is, he allows, demonstrable. In like manner, again to use Dr. Clarke's illustration,* "though the manner of the Son's derivation is above comprehension," the reality of it is strictly demonstrable. Omnipresence is a mystery, the modus, or manner of which, is beyond our comprehension, but which, as an actual attribute of the Deity, is certain. The incarnation of the Son of God, whatever may have been his previous dignity, is incomprehensible, and yet the fact is believed to be indisputable by all who regard Christ as having existed previous to his appearance upon earth. The simplicity, the self-existence, and the eternity of God are incomprehensible, and yet they are demonstrable facts.

It is, therefore, only in accordance with our invariable beliefs of supernatural truths, when we affirm, that while the existence of three persons, each God, and yet together, only one God, inasmuch as they have but one common essence or nature, is an incomprehensible mystery, the fact that God does thus exist is certain, clear and intelligible. And let it be again and again enforced upon our attention that in all such truths it is only **THE FACT** that is revealed, and only **THE FACT** that we are required to believe. Scripture neither gives, nor requires, any accurate philosophical notions of any one of God's attributes, or of any one supernatural truth. All such metaphysical difficulties are avoided and even repudiated by Scripture, as appertaining neither to what is taught, nor to what is to be believed, nor to what is to be done by us. The existence in one godhead of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and their several relations to us in the work of salvation, is all that in Scripture we are taught or required to believe, and the reluctance of human pride to acquiesce in this simple teaching, and its vain attempt to bring the nature of God within our comprehension, is the fruitful source of Unitarianism, and of every other error on the subject of the Deity.

Let it then be borne in mind, that what, as creatures, we cannot comprehend is **THE NATURE, ESSENCE and MODE**

* Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 99.

of OPERATION of all that is supernatural and divine ; but that we can, and do know certainly and infallibly whatever God is pleased to reveal to us on those subjects, in his word. And if, therefore, the doctrine of the Trinity is taught in the Bible, then we can both know and understand this doctrine as clearly and as fully as any other doctrine in reference to any other supernatural and divine truth, and as clearly as we do the certain existence of eternal objects, of whose nature and essence we are, nevertheless, supremely ignorant.

This will show the very serious error of those who think that no advantage can arise from discussing and controverting objections to the doctrine of the Trinity. God has purposely arranged the Scriptures so as to make inquiry, discussion and controversy, necessary to come to the full and perfect knowledge of the truth. Rational and scriptural investigation are the appointed means, both for ascertaining, establishing and propagating, the truth ; and the employment of those means in maintaining and defending the doctrine of the Trinity, God has often and in an especial manner, blessed and made effectual to the renewal of his church, the restoration of those who had fallen away from the truth, and the up-building and extension of his kingdom. This truth I might illustrate from every age of the church, and from every country, both in ancient and modern times. The life and energy, and spirituality of the church, have ever been found connected with the vital, practical belief of the doctrine of the Trinity and its kindred tenets, while coldness, worldliness and decay, have ever been found *leading to* the abandonment, or *following from* the abandonment, of these doctrines. This is true, also, of individual Christians, as may be seen in the experience of Newton and Cowper, of Thomas Scott, and of Chalmers. This is equally true of churches, as may be seen in the history of the churches in England, in Scotland, in Ireland, and in New England ; in all of which, the renewal of a living and active Christianity is to be distinctly traced to the restoration, after much dissension and controversy, of the doctrines of the Trinity, and its associated evangelical Christianity. And it is only necessary for any church to allow these doctrines to be kept out

of the pulpit, and to assume that they are already sufficiently and securely held, to give the enemy all the opportunity he desires to sow tares, which will ere long spring up and choke the good seed, and overspread the garden of the Lord with the weeds of putrefaction and decay.

The following hymns of the Ancient Church, will illustrate the practical nature of the doctrine of the Trinity:

Matins.

Thrice holy God, of wondrous might,
O Trinity of love divine,
To thee belongs unclouded light,
And everlasting joys are thine.

About thy throne dark clouds abound,
About thee shine such dazzling rays
That angels, as they stand around
Are fain to tremble as they gaze.

Thy new-born people, gracious Lord,
Confess thee in thine own great name;
By hope they taste the rich reward,
Which faith already dares to claim.

Father, may we thy laws fulfil,
Blest Son, may we thy precepts learn;
And thou, blest Spirit, guide our will,
Our feet unto thy pathway turn.

Yea Father, may thy will be done,
And may we thus thy name adore,
Together with thy blessed Son,
And Holy Ghost for evermore.

*Amen.**Evensong.*

O Thou who dwellest bright on high,
Thou ever-blessed Trinity!
Thee we confess, in thee believe,
To thee with pious heart we cleave.

O Father, by thy saints adored,
O Son of God, our blessed Lord,
O Holy Spirit who dost join,
Father and Son with love divine.

We see the Father in the Son,
And with the Father Christ is one:
All three one blessed truth approve,
All three compose one holy love.

To God the Father, God the Son,
And Holy Ghost, be glory done;
One God Almighty,—we adore,
With heart and voice for evermore.*

Matins.

Thou ever blessed triune light,
And Thou, great God, the highest might,
Now that the setting sun departs,
Shed ye your light upon our hearts.

To you, each morn our voices rise,
Each eve we praise, when daylight dies;
Oh! let such praises still ascend
Till time himself shall find an end.

Praise be to God, who is in Heaven!
Praise to his blessed Son be given!
Thee, Holy Spirit we implore!
Be with us and evermore!

From the Evensong.

Praise, honour, glory, worship, be
Unto the blest Almighty Three!
Praise to the Sire, who rules above,
Praise to the virgin-nurtur'd Son,

Who hath for us salvation won;
Praise to that Holy Spirit's love,
Through whose blest teaching we adore
The triune God, for evermore.†

Glory to God the Trinity,
Whose name has mysteries unknown;
In essence One, in persons Three;
A social nature, yet alone.

When all our noblest powers are joined
The honours of thy name to praise,
Thy glories overmatch our mind,
And angels faint beneath the praise.

* Hymns of Primitive Church, by Chandler, pp. 92-94.

† From "Hymnarium Anglicanum," or, "Hymns of the Ancient Anglican Church," pp. 47, 50.

NOTE A.

Waterland (vol. 1, part 2, p. 157,) gives the following positions of some or other of the Arians in respect of the Son:

1. Not consubstantial with God the Father.
2. Not co-eternal, however begotten before all ages, or without any known limitation of time.
3. Of a distinct inferior nature, however otherwise perfectly like the Father.
4. Not strictly and essentially God, but partaking of the Father's Divinity.
5. A creature of the Father's, however unlike to the rest of the creatures, or superior to them.
6. Not like the Father, but in nature and substance like other creatures.
7. Made in time: there having been a time when he was not, made of nothing.
8. Far inferior to the Father in knowledge, power and perfections.
9. Mutable in his nature, as a creature, though unchangeable by decree.
10. Dependent on the good pleasure of the Father for his past, present, and future being.
11. Not knowing the Father perfectly, nor himself; his knowledge being that of a creature, and therefore, finite.
12. Made a little before the world was made; and for the sake of those that should be after him.

These are the Arian principles, brought down as low as they well can go. Arius, the author and founder of the sect, seems to have gone through all those steps at the first, and indeed, all of them, except the last, hang together, and are but the necessary consequences of each other. Those that stopped in the midway, or sooner, might be more pious and modest, but less consistent men. . . . The nine last particulars were, for some time, and by the Arians in general, waived, dropped, not insisted on, (as being too gross to take,) or else artfully insinuated only, under specious and plausible expressions. The first they all owned and insisted the most upon, having many pretences to urge against consubstantiality, either name or thing. The second and third they divided upon, as to the way of expression; some speaking their minds plainly, others with more reserve; not so much denying the co-eternity, as forbearing to affirm it. This was the method which the Arians took to propagate their heresy. We do not wonder if they were often forced to make use of collusions, equivocations, and double entendres; for, being obliged, for fear of offence, to use Catholic words, though without a Catholic meaning; and to maintain their main principle, without seeming to maintain its necessary consequences, (nay, seeming to deny and respect them,) it could not be otherwise. And not only the Catholics frequently complain of those smooth gentlemen, but some even of their own party, could not endure such shuffling; thinking it became honest and sincere men, either to speak out, or to say nothing. Of this kind were Aetius and Eunomius, with their followers, called Anomæans and Exoucontii, being indeed, no other, in respect to the Son's divinity, than such as Arius was at first; and speaking almost as plainly and bluntly as he did. After the disguises and softening, and colourings, had been carried on so long, till all men of sense saw plainly, that it was high time to leave off trifling, and to come from words to things; and that there was no medium, but either to settle into orthodoxy, or, to sit down with the pure Arians and Anomæans, (if they

would determine anything, and be sincere and consistent men,) some choose the former and some the latter, according as they more inclined to one way or the other. There is certainly no medium betwixt orthodoxy and Arianism, (for *Semi-Arianism, if so understood, is perfect nonsense and contradiction,) there being no medium between God and creature, between unmade and made. Men may conceal their sentiments, suppress consequences and speak their minds but by halves; and so one Arian may be more cautious, or more artful than another; but, in truth and reality, every man that disowns the consubstantiality, rightly understood, is as much an Arian as Eunomius or Aetius, or any of the ancient Arians were, or, even as Arius himself, excepting only some few particulars, which were not his standing and settled opinions.

NOTE B.

"The Son is supposed a creature of the Father's. Now, if his being of, or from, the Father, in this sense, makes him one God with the Father, it will follow that angels, or *men*, or, even things inanimate, are one God with the Father also. Indeed, to do you justice, you do not so much as pretend, that unity of principle, or anything else, can make him one God with the Father; which is enough to show how very widely you differ from the ancients, in the main point of all. They thought it necessary to assert that Father and Son were both, one God. So Irenæus, Athanasius, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Hippolytus, Lactantius, and even Eusebius himself, after some debates upon it, as may appear from the testimonies before referred to; and of the Post-Nicene Catholic writers, in general, every body knows how they contended for it. The thought that the divinity of the Son could not be otherwise secured, and Polytheism at the same time avoided, than by asserting Father and Son to be one God; and they thought right. But what do you do! or how can you contrive to clear your scheme! We ask if the Son be God, as well as the Father! You say, *yes*. How then, we ask, is there but one God! Your answer is, the Father is *supreme*, and, therefore, he, singly, is the one God. This is taking away what you gave us before, and retracting what you asserted of the Son. If supremacy only makes a person God, the Son is no God, upon your principles; or, if he is God notwithstanding, then Father and Son are two Gods. Turn this over as often as you please, you will find it impossible to extricate yourself from it. You can say only this; that you do not admit two supreme Gods. This is very true, no more did the Pagan Polytheists, nor the idolatrous Samaritans, nor others condemned in Scripture for Polytheism."

The allegation made by Unitarians therefore, that this doctrine is absurd and contradictory, is founded on ignorance and presumption. It is also suicidal, since all such objections apply with equal, if not greater, force to the Unitarian hypothesis. The existence of God as an omnipotent, omnipresent, and yet spiritual being, involves every difficulty and every apparent contradiction imputed to the doctrine of the Trinity, and

* Semi-Arianus, et Semi-Deus, et Semi-creatura perinde monstra et portentosa sunt, quæ sani et pii omnes merito exhorrent.—Bull. D. F., p. 284.

is just as far beyond the utmost capacity of human reason. Difficulties insurmountable to human reason inhere in the very nature of the subject; and such difficulties therefore, must be one characteristic of a divine revelation and pre-eminently, as it relates to the nature of God and his mode of existence. Besides, to use the words of Bishop Horaley, "hath the Arian hypothesis no difficulty, when it ascribes both the first formation and the perpetual government of the universe, not to the Deity, but to an inferior being? Can any power or wisdom less than supreme, be a sufficient ground for the trust we are required to place in Providence? Make the wisdom and the power of our ruler what you please; still, upon the Arian principle, it is the wisdom and the power of the creature. Where then, will be the certainty that the evil which we find in the world, hath not crept in through some imperfections in the original contrivance, or in the present management? Since every intellect below the first, may be liable to error, and any power, short of the supreme, may be inadequate to purposes of a certain magnitude. But if evil may have thus crept in, what assurance can we have that it will ever be extirpated? In the Socinian scheme, is it no difficulty that the capacity of a mere man or of any created being, should contain that wisdom by which God made the universe? Whatever is meant by *the Word* in St. John's gospel, it is the same Word of which the Evangelist says, that "all things were made by it" and that it "was itself made flesh." If this Word be the divine attribute Wisdom, then that attribute, in the degree which was equal to the formation of the universe, in this view of the Scripture doctrine, was conveyed entire into the mind of a mere man, the son of a Jewish carpenter. A much greater difficulty, in my apprehension, than any that is to be found in the Catholic faith.

The Unitarian hypothesis implies also, that the Son was born before all times, yet is not eternal; not a creature, yet not God; of God's substance, yet not of the same substance; and his exact and perfect resemblance in all things, yet not a second Deity—a creed really involving those contradictions in terms of which the orthodox are wrongfully accused. It cannot escape from one of two conclusions—"either the establishment of a sort of polytheism or as the more practical alternative, that of the mere humanity of Christ; i. e. either the superstition of paganism, or the virtual atheism of philosophy. It confesses our Lord to be God, yet at the same time infinitely distant from the perfections of the One Eternal cause. Here, at once, a *ditheism* is acknowledged. But Athanasius pushes on the admission to that of an unlimited polytheism. "If," he says, "the Son were an object of worship for his transcendent glory, then every subordinate being is bound to worship his superior." But so repulsive is the notion of a secondary God, both to reason, and much more to Christianity, that the real tendency of Arianism lay towards the sole remaining alternative, the humanitarian scheme.*"

The Arian creed, if considered in all its bearings and deductions, will, perhaps, appear much less rational and philosophical than has been sometimes asserted. It has been described as a simpler and less mystical hypothesis than that of the Trinitarians, and yet it requires us to apply the same term, God, to two beings who differ as widely from each other as the Creator and his creature. It requires us to speak of Christ as the

* See Newman's *History of Arians of the Fourth Century*, pp. 220, 221, 246-248.

begotten Son of God, though he only differs from all other creatures by having preceded them in the order of time. It requires us to believe of this Created Being, that he was himself, employed in creating the world; and to invest him with every attribute of Deity, except that of having existed from all eternity. If we contrast these notions with the creed of the Trinitarians, they will be found to present still greater difficulties to our faculties of comprehension.*

ARTICLE II.

"ELSE WHAT SHALL THEY DO WHICH ARE BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD, IF THE DEAD RISE NOT AT ALL? WHY ARE THEY THEN BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD?"—1 Cor. 15: 29.†

This is one of the most difficult passages in St. Paul's epistles. It has given abundant employment to the speculative and curious. Its explanations have been almost as various as its interpreters are numerous. Each construction has been defended more or less ingeniously, and in a manner satisfactory to the author. Many inquirers into St. Paul's meaning change their own opinions respecting it, as soon as they read some new commentator; while others are only confirmed in their own views by opposition, and set themselves at once to refute whatever conflicts with their own expositions. In the meanwhile, this passage has been anxiously expounded. Scarcely any explanation of it has been generally adopted,—none has gained for itself a catholic character, and settled deep in the convictions of the universal church. It has, consequently, been regarded as uncertain, if not almost useless; and Christians at large, when they privately read this portion of God's word, or when they

* Burton's Testimonies of the Fathers to the Trinity, page 4.

† This article, as the reader perceives, is presented in the form of a sermon. It is from the pen of the Rev. J. H. Fowles, recently deceased, one of the most Evangelical and useful ministers of the Episcopal Church, in Philadelphia, and for many years a resident of this State. It has a special interest attaching to it, as being one of the last discourses delivered to the people of his charge; and thus giving point to his exposition of this difficult passage. As the author has passed away from earth, we have not felt at liberty to alter in any degree, the form of his discourse; although being designed for a congregation, it differs from the usual form of Review articles.—Eps. S. P. Rev.