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EIGHT LETTERS

CONCERNING

THE BLESSED TRINITY:

BY

JOHN WALLIS, D.D.,

FORMERLY SAVILIAN PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

A New Edition,

WITH

THE AUTHOR'S LAST REVISIONS AND CORRECTIONS:

TOGETHER WITH

A PREFACE AND NOTES

BY

THOMAS FLINTOFF.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE Letters written by Dr. John Wallis, in vindication of the blessed Trinity, which form the subject of the present republication, have received high praise from very different and generally discordant authorities. While they have met with the marked approval of Dr. Waterland, the late excellent Bishop Burgess, and the eminent nonconformist, Mr. John Howe, they have been recommended with equal warmth by Archbishop Whateley and Dr. Parr. Nor has the notice accorded to them been confined to this country. A very learned foreigner, in a most elaborate work on the subject of the Trinity, published abroad some years ago, speaks in the following terms of Wallis, in reviewing the various attempts to illustrate the mysterious union of Three in One. “*Quam præclare Wallisius de logica facultate itemque de mathematica ac physica meritus fuerit; omnibus opinor notum qui vel*

rapida tantum lectione illius opera percucurrerint. Is dynamices leges, quibus non parum falsitatis erat admixtum, experiundo patefecit. Is de centro gravitatis omnium primus pro dignitate disputavit, specimenque præbuit arithmeticae infinitorum, quæ posset quadantenus vicem supplere calculi integralis, admiranda cujus inventio tanto deinceps honore auctorem suum cumulavit. Atque vir iste cujus tam egregia extabant erga scientias merita, sibi induxit in animum, si forte valuisset, quærere creatis in rebus, exemplum quo Trinitatis fidem rationis usu redderet præclariorem. Quod porro exemplum, ut mathesim quoque accerceret adjutricem fidei, de geometricis rebus, hoc est, de trina dimensione corporum excitavit et quantum eniti potuit, confirmavit.”*

At a period when the Arianism of Milton, at least in his latter days, has been unfortunately placed beyond dispute, and when the orthodoxy of Newton and Locke, on the essential point of the Trinity, has been with some reason doubted, it will not, I trust, be deemed unnecessary or superfluous to bring

* *Metaphysica sublimior de Deo, Trino et Uno.* Auctore Marco Mastrofini. Tom. I. Romæ, 1816. Folio.

forward the testimony, contained in the following Letters, of the greatest mathematician of his time on that most important subject.

To whom the first Letter was addressed, does not appear. It was published by Wallis, in 4to, in 1690, when the Trinitarian controversy was waxing hot between Sherlock and his various opponents, and contains the famous parallel of the cube, which has always been considered the happiest illustration, borrowed from material objects, hitherto made use of to shadow out the mysterious characteristics of the Trinity. It appears from a passage at page 111, that the idea of this parallel had occurred to Wallis forty years before, and that he had mentioned it at Oxford about that time to Dr. Seth Ward, then Astronomy-Professor there.

It has been a matter of doubt with some eminent divines, whether any solid benefit to faith or piety is derivable from attempts to illustrate the credenda of religion by what must necessarily be inadequate and deficient, and fail in some part or other of conveying the desired resemblance. But admitting the utter impossibility of fully expressing any of the higher mysteries of our faith, by analogies

or parallels borrowed from external objects, surely the use of them, when cautiously and modestly propounded, is not merely warrantable, but even to be commended. Let it be ever recollected that they are not intended to supply the place of argument, but only to be introduced when argument, from the depths of the mystery and the imperfections of human reason, can do little or nothing to elucidate the subject. To confirm the faith of the doubtful, to silence the sceptic, and to give fuller intuition to the devout, we are called upon to make use of any means which Providence has placed in our power and scripture does not interdict, and infinitely various as are the minds, and tempers, and dispositions of men, it is gratifying to know that there are subsidia, in the armory of faith, fitted and proportioned to every occasion and every capacity. With some a striking parallel will produce more conviction than the slower process of logical argumentation. We know that it was from the apparent correspondence of mathematical with divine truths that Pascal first became devout, and Barrow turned his attention to theology.

In the second and subsequent Letters,

which were published by Wallis, in 4to, in 1691-2, he defends his first Letter, and the illustration there contained, from several animadversions which had been made upon it by various writers, and explains more fully his parallel of the cube. Perhaps in none of his writings is his acuteness more eminently shewn than in these replies. The observations he makes on the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed and the various texts of scripture which he cites, are exceedingly valuable; and the perspicuity and logical exactness with which he conducts the defence of his argument through various digressions, and notwithstanding many attempts made by his opponents to change the state of the question, is truly admirable. Throughout the whole the precision of the veteran geometer, trained and practised in ratiocination, is distinctly perceptible.

Wallis subsequently published Three Sermons concerning the sacred Trinity, 1691, 4to. These, which it is intended to republish in a separate form, were bound up with the eight Letters, and the following general title prefixed. "Theological Discourses, containing eight Letters and three Sermons

concerning the Blessed Trinity. By John Wallis, D. D., Professor of Geometry in Oxford. London: printed for Tho. Parkhurst, at the Bible and Three Crowns, at the lower end of Cheapside, near Mercer's Chapel, 1692." 4to. In the Latin edition of Wallis's Collected Works, in three vols., fol., 1693-9, a Latin version of the three Sermons was included; but of the Letters, except the first,* no republication has been made up to the present time, and copies have accordingly become exceedingly scarce.

Under these circumstances the present reprint was projected, and I was confirmed in my intention of offering a new edition of the Letters to the public by fortunately meeting with Wallis's own copy of them, with considerable additions and corrections in his handwriting, evidently inserted by him with a view to a second edition. From this revised copy, which with Wallis's MSS. correspondence on the subject of the Letters, was formerly in the possession of Joseph Parkes, Esq., and is now in the collection of my

* Inserted in Wallis's Life prefixed to his Sermons, 1792, 8vo., and Bishop Burgess's Tracts on the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Durham, 1814. 12mo.

friend, James Crossley, Esq., to whose valuable assistance I am much indebted, the present edition has been printed, and the additional passages have been inserted in their respective places, though it has not been deemed necessary to distinguish them by brackets from the original text.

It remains only to add, that should any pecuniary profit arise by the present republication, it is intended to be appropriated to the relief of Mr. William Wallis, a lineal descendant of the illustrious author of these Letters, who at a very advanced age, unassisted by the liberality of the lovers of those sciences which his ancestor so eminently promoted and adorned, is now suffering in the metropolis all the privations of penury and distress.

T. FLINTOFF.

Broughton, 27th July, 1840.

AN EXPLICATION AND VINDICATION
OF THE
ATHANASIAN CREED,
IN A THIRD LETTER.
PURSUANT OF TWO FORMER CONCERNING THE SACRED TRINITY;
TOGETHER
WITH A POSTSCRIPT, IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER LETTER.
BY JOHN WALLIS, D.D.

[PUBLISHED IN 1691.]

THE DOCTRINE
OF
THE BLESSED TRINITY

BRIEFLY EXPLAINED.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND:

FORMING THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF LETTERS ON THAT SUBJECT.

BY JOHN WALLIS, D.D.

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[PUBLISHED IN 1696.]

LETTER I.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BLESSED TRINITY BRIEFLY EXPLAINED,
IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

SIR,

THE doctrine of the Arians, Socinians, or Anti-Trinitarians, call them as you please, provided you call them not orthodox Christians, in opposition to those who believe, according to the Word of God, that the sacred Trinity, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are so distinguished each from other, as that the Father is not the Son, or Holy Ghost; the Son not the Father, or Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost not the Father, or Son; yet so united, or intimately one, as that they are all one God; which, in the Athanasian Creed, is called Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity; or, in common speaking, three persons and one God; is what you were lately discoursing with me, and of which I shall give you some of my present thoughts.

The Scripture tells us plainly, “There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word,

and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one, 1 John v. 7. And the form of baptism, Matt. xxviii. 19, is, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

And the Christian church, from the time of Christ and his apostles downwards hitherto, as well before as since the council of Nice, have ever held the divinity of those three persons, as they are commonly called; and that these three are but one God. And that they have so held, hath been, by divers, sufficiently proved from the most ancient Christian writers which are now extant. Which, therefore, I take for granted as sufficiently proved by others, without spending time, at present, to prove it anew.

That these are three, distinguished each from other, is manifest: and that this distinction amongst themselves is wont to be called personality. By which word we mean that distinction, whatever it be, whereby they are distinguished each from other, and thence called three persons.

If the word person do not please, we need not be fond of words, so the thing be agreed: yet is it a good word, and warranted by Scripture, Heb. i. 3, where the Son is called “the express image of his Father’s person:” for so we render the word *hypostasis*, which is there used; and mean by it, what I think to be there meant. And we have no reason to waive the word, since we know no better to put in the place of it.

If it be asked, what these personalities or characteristics are, whereby each person is distinguished from other; I think we have little more thereof in Scripture, than that the Father is said to beget; the Son to be begotten; and the Holy Ghost to proceed.

If it be further asked, what is the full import of these words, which are but metaphorical, and what is the adequate meaning of them, I think we need not trouble ourselves about it: for since it is a matter purely of revelation, not of natural knowledge, and we know no more of it than what is revealed in Scripture, where the Scripture is silent we may be content to be ignorant. And we who know so little of the essence of any thing, especially of spiritual beings, though finite, need not think it strange that we are not able to comprehend all the particularities of what concerns that of God, and the blessed Trinity.

I know that the fathers, and schoolmen, and some after them, have employed their wits to find out some faint resemblances from natural things, whereby to express their imperfect conceptions of the sacred Trinity: but they do not pretend to give an adequate account of it; but only some conjectural hypothesis, rather of what may be than of what certainly is. Nor need we be concerned, to be curiously inquisitive into it, beyond what God hath been pleased to reveal concerning it.

That the three persons are distinguished, is evi-

dent; though we do not perfectly understand what those distinctions are. That to each of these the Scripture ascribes divinity, is abundantly shewed by those who have written on this subject. That there is but one God, is agreed on all hands. That the Father is said to beget, the Son to be begotten, and the Holy Ghost to proceed, is agreed also; though we do not perfectly understand the full import of these words.

And here we might quietly acquiesce, without troubling ourselves further, did not the clamorous Socinians importunately suggest the impossibility and inconsistency of these things, insomuch as to tell us, that how clear soever the expressions of Scripture be, or can be, to this purpose, they will not believe it, as being inconsistent with natural reason. And, therefore, though they do not yet think fit to give us a barefaced rejection of Scripture; yet they do (and must, they tell us,) put such a forced sense on the words of it, be they never so plain, as to make them signify somewhat else.

There is, therefore, in this doctrine of the Trinity, as in that of the resurrection from the dead, a double inquiry: first, whether it be possible; and then, whether it be true. And these to be argued, in both cases, from a very different topic: the one from natural reason; the other from revelation. Yet so, that this latter doth certainly conclude the former, if rightly understood. And though we should not be able to solve all difficulties; yet must we believe

the thing, if revealed, unless we will deny the authority of such revelation.

Thus our Saviour, against the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, Matt. xxii. 29, "Ye err," saith he, "not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." The power of God, if rightly understood, was enough, from the light of reason, to prove it not impossible: but, whether or no it will be so, which natural reason could not determine, was to be argued from Scripture revelation.

In like manner, St. Paul before Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 8, first argues the possibility of it; "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" For if Agrippa did believe the creation of the world, as many even of the heathen did, from the light of nature, he could not think it impossible for that God, who had at first made all things of nothing, to recollect, out of its dust or ashes, a body which once had been. But whether or no he would do so, depended upon another question to be after asked, v. 27, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" For this was purely matter of revelation, and could not otherwise be known. For, as to the immortality of the soul, and a future state hereafter, many of the heathens went very far, by the light of nature; but as to the resurrection of the body, I do not find they had any sentiments about it, or but very faint, if any: and if they had, it may well be supposed to be the remainder of some ancient tradition from

the Jews, or their predecessors. Nor do I see any foundation in nature which should make them think of it, before it was revealed, any more than of the redemption of mankind by Christ, which we should never have thought of, had not God himself contrived and declared it to us. But, when that of the resurrection was once suggested, there was no pretence of reason to think it a thing impossible; and, therefore, no reason to doubt the truth of it when declared, if we believe the Scriptures, wherein it is revealed, especially those of the New Testament.

It is much the same as to the doctrine of the Trinity. It is a thing we should not have thought of, if it had not been suggested by divine writers; but, when suggested, there is nothing in natural reason that we know of, or can know of, why it should be thought impossible; but whether or no it be so, depends only upon revelation.

And in this case the revelation seems so clear to those who believe the Scriptures, that we have no reason to doubt of it, unless the thing be found to be really impossible, and inconsistent with reason. Nor do the Anti-Trinitarians insist on any other ground why they deny it, save only, that it seems to them absolutely impossible; and, therefore, think themselves bound to put another sense on all places of Scripture, how clear soever they be, or can be, which prove or favour it.

So that the controversy is now reduced to this

single point, whether it be possible or not possible : whether it be consistent or inconsistent with natural light or reason. And to that point, therefore, I shall confine my discourse. For it seems agreed on all hands, as to those who believe the Scriptures, that, if it be not impossible, it is sufficiently revealed.

Now for us who understand so little of God's infinite essence, and which it is impossible for us fully to comprehend, who are ourselves but finite, and mostly conversant with material objects ; inso-much that we cannot pretend to understand the essence of our own souls ; and when we attempt to explain it, must do it rather by saying what it is not, than what it is ; so hard a matter is it for us to fix in our mind or fancy a notion, idea, or conception of a spiritual being, which falls not under our senses : it is hard, I say, for us who understand so little of a spirit to determine, of what God is pleased to reveal, that it is impossible, or inconsistent with his essence, which essence we cannot understand.

But what is it that is thus pretended to be impossible ? It is but this, that there be three somewhats, which are but one God : and these somewhats we commonly call persons. Now what inconsistency is there in all this ? That Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three, is manifest ; and are in Scripture language distinguished. That there is but one God, is manifest also ; and all those three are this God. That the name person

is no incongruous word, is evident from Heb. i. 3, where it is used. If it be said, it doth not agree to them exactly in the same sense in which it is commonly used amongst men; we say so too, nor doth any word, when applied to God, signify just the same as when applied to men, but only somewhat analogous thereunto.

What kind or degree of distinction, according to our metaphysics, this is, we need not be very solicitous to inquire; or, whether, in our metaphysics, accommodated to our notions of finite beings, there be any name for it: it is enough for us, if these three may truly be so distinguished, as that one be not the other, and yet all but one God.

Now, that there is no inconsistence or impossibility, that, what in one regard are three, may in another regard be one, is very manifest from many instances that may be given even in finite beings, such as we converse with; which, though they do not adequately agree with this of the sacred Trinity, nor is it to be expected that they should; finite with what is infinite; yet there is enough in them to shew that there is no such inconsistence as is pretended.

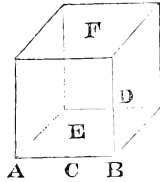
I shall spare to instance in many resemblances which have been given long since by fathers and schoolmen, or by later writers.* Which, though they are not pretended to be adequately the same with that of the sacred Trinity, as neither will any

* NOT A

thing else be that we can take from finite beings; yet are they sufficient to shew that there is no inconsistency in it; which is all that is here incumbent on us to prove. I shall only name a few.

I will begin with what concerns the most gross of finite beings, that is, material bodies.

Suppose we then a cubical body, which what it is, every one knows, that knows a die. In this are three dimensions, length, breadth, and height, and yet but one cube. Its length, (suppose between east and west) A. B. Its breadth, (suppose between north and south) C. D. Its height, (between bottom and top) E. F. Here are three local dimensions, truly distinguished



each from other, not only imaginarily. The distance between east and west, whether we think or think not of it, is not that between north and south; nor be either of these that between top and bottom. The length is not the breadth, or height; the breadth is not the length, or height; and the height is not the length, or breadth; but they are three dimensions, truly distinct each from other: yet are all these but one cube; and if any one of the three were wanting, it were not a cube. There is no inconsistency, therefore, that what in one regard are three, (three dimensions) may in another regard be so united as to be but one, (one cube.) And if it may be so in corporeals, much more in spirituals.

Suppose we further, each of these dimensions infinitely continued; the length infinitely eastward and westward, the breadth infinitely northward and southward, the height infinitely upward and downward. Here are three infinite dimensions, and but one infinite cube; there being no limits in nature, greater than which a cube cannot be; and these three dimensions, though distinct, are equal each to other, else it were not a cube: and though we should allow that a cube cannot be infinite, because a body, and, therefore, a finite creature; yet a spirit may; such as is the infinite God; and, therefore, no inconsistency that there be three personalities, each infinite, and all equal, and yet but one infinite God, essentially the same with those three persons.

I add further, that such infinite cube can, therefore, be but one, and those three dimensions can be but three; not more nor fewer. For, if infinite as to its length, eastward and westward; and as to its breadth, northward and southward; and as to its height, upward and downward; it will take up all imaginary space possible, and leave no room either for more cubes or more dimensions: and if this infinite cube were, and shall be, eternally so, its dimensions also must be infinite and co-eternal.

I say further, if in this supposed cube, we suppose in order, not in time, its first dimension, that of length, as A. B., and to this length be given an equal breadth, which is the true generation of a square, as C. D., which completes the square basis

of this cube; and to this basis, of length and breadth, be given, as by a further procession from both, an equal height, E. F., which completes the cube; and all this eternally, for such is the cube supposed to be, here is a fair resemblance, if we may *parvis componere magna*, of the Father, as the fountain or original; of the Son, as generated of him from all eternity; and of the Holy Ghost, as eternally proceeding from both: and all this without any inconsistency. This *longum, latum, profundum*, (long, broad, and tall) is but one cube, of three dimensions, and yet but one body: and this Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons, and yet but one God. And as there, the dimensions are not, in the abstract, predicated or affirmed each of other, or the cube of either, the length is not the breadth or height, nor either of these a cube; but, in the concrete, cube is affirmed of all; this *longum, latum, profundum*, is a cube, and the same cube. So here, in the abstract, the personality of the Father is not that of the Son, nor either of these that of the Holy Ghost, nor the Deity or Godhead any of these; but, in the concrete, though the personalities are not, yet the persons are, each of them God, and the same God.

If it be objected, that those concretes are affirmed or predicated each of other; that *longum* is also *latum* and *profundum*, this long is broad and tall: but not so here; the Father is not the Son or Holy Ghost. I answer, that if the words be rightly con-

sidered, the analogy holds here also : for when we say, this long is broad and tall, where cube or body is understood, the full meaning is plainly thus—this body, which, as to one dimension, that of length, is said to be a long body, is the same body ; which, as to another dimension, that of breadth, is said to be a broad body ; and which, as to a third dimension, that of height, is said to be a tall body. So here, that God, which, as to one personality, is God the Father, is the same God ; which, as to another personality, is God the Son ; and which, as to a third personality, is God the Holy Ghost. So the analogy holds every way, nor is there any inconsistency in either case.

I proceed to the consideration of somewhat more spiritual, and less material than that of a body locally extended.

Suppose we then a created angel, or human soul ; at least if those who deny the blessed Trinity will allow that there are such beings ; but if they be Sadducees, who do not acknowledge either angel or spirit, or that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, which testify both, which I doubt is the case of some of them, let them speak out, that so we may know whom we have to deal with ; and not pretend to nibble only at the Athanasian Creed, or some expressions therein, while the quarrel is indeed at somewhat higher, though, *ad amoliendam invidiam*, they think fit to dissemble it, and that they do but faintly believe, if at all, that the Holy

Scriptures are the Word of God, or the doctrines therein contained to be such. And we have reason to suspect it, when they spare not to let us know, that, were this doctrine of the Trinity therein delivered in words as express as could be, they would not believe it.

But suppose we, what they would seem to grant, and what I am so charitable as to think divers of them do believe, that there are spiritual beings, such as angels and the souls of men; and that these spiritual beings are endued with knowledge, or wisdom, and force, or an executive power, to act according to that knowledge. That there is some such thing, at least in man, whether body or soul, they cannot but acknowledge; for themselves be, and know, and do. And though we cannot fully comprehend, much less express in words, how all this is so; for we are here at a loss, as well as in higher things; yet, that it is, they cannot deny, though they do not know how.

Now, to be, and to know, and to do, are certainly distinct each from other; though, perhaps, we are not all agreed of what kind, or in what degree this distinction is. To be is not the same as to know, for that may be where this is not; and to do is, for the same reason, somewhat different from both those: for a man may be and may know what he doth not do; yet it is one and the same soul, at least one and the same man, which is, and knows, and does. There is, therefore, no impossibility or inconsistence

in it, that what in one regard are three, may in another regard be one. Thus in the sacred Trinity, if we conceive of the Father as the original or first person, who begets the Son; the Son as the wisdom of the Father, begotten of him; and the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of the Father and the Son, as proceeding from both, and yet the same God with both; or what other distinction there may be of these three persons, who are but one God, that we do not know; there is no inconsistency in it, that these three may be one; three in one regard, and one in another.

I might shew the same as to the understanding, will, and meaning, which are all the same soul: and the known metaphysical terms of *unum*, *verum*, *bonum*, which are all but the same *ens*. And many other instances of like nature.

But we hold, it will be said, a greater distinction than that of *unum*, *verum*, *bonum*, between the three persons in the sacred Trinity. Be it so. But what that greater distinction is, we do not pretend to comprehend. However, it is from all these instances evident, that there is no impossibility or inconsistency with reason, that what in one regard are three, may in another regard be one. Which is what we undertook to shew.

It is true, that not any, nor all of these instances, nor any of those given by other learned men, do adequately express the distinction and unity of the persons in the sacred Trinity; for neither hath God

distinctly declared it to us, nor are we able fully to comprehend it, nor is it necessary for us to know. But because we do not know “how the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child,”* shall we, therefore, say they do not grow there? Or, because “we cannot by searching find out God, because we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection,”† shall we, therefore, say things cannot be, when God says they are, only because we know not how? If God say, “These three are one,”‡ shall we say, they are not? If God say, “The Word was God,” and “The Word was made flesh,”|| shall we say, not so, only because we cannot tell how? It is safer to say, it is, when God says it is, though we know not, in particular, how it is. Especially when there be so many instances in nature, to shew it not to be impossible or inconsistent with reason. The thing is sufficiently revealed to those who are willing to be taught, and “receive the truth in the love of it.”§ Nor is it denied by those who gainsay it, but that, if the thing be possible, it is sufficiently revealed; there being no other exception made as to the revelation, but the impossibility of the thing. “But if any man list to be contentious,”¶ and to “quarrel about words,”** it is no wonder if “hearing, they do hear and not understand;”†† and that God

* Eccl. xi. 5. † Job xi. 7. ‡ 1 John v. 7. || John i. 1, 14.

§ 2 Thess. ii. 10. ¶ 1 Cor. xi. 16. Rom. ii. 8.

** 2 Tim. vi. 4. Tit. iii. 9. †† Acts xxviii. 28. Matt. xiii. 13.

“give them over to believe a lie,” who do not “love the truth.”* But “the humble he will teach his way,” † and while we be so we be safe. ‡

* 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. Rom. i. 21, 28. † Psalm xxv. 9.

‡ NOTE B.

Yours,

JOHN WALLIS.

August 11, 1690.

A SECOND LETTER
CONCERNING
THE HOLY TRINITY,
PURSUANT TO THE FORMER FROM THE SAME HAND,
OCCASIONED BY A LETTER, THERE INSERTED, FROM ONE UNKNOWN.
BY JOHN WALLIS, D.D.

[PUBLISHED IN 1691.]



LETTER II.

CONCERNING THE SACRED TRINITY.

SIR,

I UNDERSTAND by your letter, of Sept. 20, that you have printed a letter of mine concerning the Trinity; and have sent me some copies of it to Oxford. But I am not there to receive them; and so have yet seen none of them: but your letter thither was sent me thence by the post.

I have, since yours, received, by the same way, a letter directed to me, subscribed W. J.; but I know not from whom. I suppose it is somebody in London, to whom you have presented a book, for which he returns me thanks.

That letter to me was thus, (with the post-mark at London, SE. 23. from whence I supply the date, which in the letter was wanting.)

For the Reverend Dr. Wallis, Professor of Geometry, at Oxford.

SIR,

I RECEIVED the honour of your letter, and return you humble and hearty thanks for it. It is writ, in my opinion,

in a modest, peaceable, and Christian style; and I wish it may please others as well as it doth me. I am afraid, however, that it will not give satisfaction to the scholastic Athanasian-Trinitarian. For they are so particular, and withal so positive, in the explication of the greatest of mysteries, as if they understood it as well as any article of their Christian faith.

Your explication of personality gives no distaste to me, when you say, (page 4) "They are distinguished by personality:" and, "by personality I mean that distinction whereby they are distinguished." Yet I am afraid the high flown School-Trinitarians will say, this is trifling, and *idem per idem*. Though to me it hath this good sense, that we know there is a distinction betwixt them, which we call personality; but we can affix no notion to this personality, which is common to it with other personalities, either human or angelical; and, therefore, we can only say, it is that distinction whereby the three hypostases are distinguished.

But you still use a greater latitude, as to the notion of these persons, or personalities, when you call them "somewhats," (page 9). That, you say, which is pretended to be impossible by the Anti-Trinitarians is only this, "That there be three somewhats, which are but one God: and these somewhats we commonly call persons." This I take only to signify, that the true notion, and the true name, of that distinction is unknown to us, yet the distinction is certain.

But the deep learned School-Trinitarians, who decide all things to an hair's breadth, will, I imagine, ridicule this expression.

A late learned and ingenious author,* you know, hath

* Dr. Sherlock.

gone much further in his determinations about this point. He makes your "three somewhats," not only "three persons," but "three substantial beings," (page 47) and "three infinite minds," (page 66). And the contrary, he says, is both heresy and nonsense.

Three infinite minds is the same as three infinite spirits. And by infinite, the author understands here, not infinite in extension, but in perfection. So that the three hypostases are three spirits, whereof each is infinite in perfection.

Then, saith the Anti-Trinitarian, they are three Gods. For what better notion, or what better definition, have we of God, than that he is a Spirit infinitely perfect? And, if there be three such, there are three Gods. In like manner, three substantial beings really distinct, are three substances really distinct. And if each of these substances be endued with infinite perfection, it will be hard to keep them from being three Gods.

We do not well know what particular explication of the Trinity those persons gave, whom the ancients call *Tri-theites*. But this we know, that the great offence which is taken at the Christian doctrine of the Trinity by the Jews and Mahometans, is from the appearance of polytheism in that doctrine. Which appearance, methinks, is rather increased than lessened by this explication; and, consequently, the scandal which, to them, follows upon it.

But the learned author hath an expedient to prevent polytheism, notwithstanding the real distinction of his three infinite spirits. Which is, by making them mutually conscious of one another's thoughts and actions: whereby, he says, they would be so united as to make but one God. That, methinks, doth not follow, that upon this mutual consciousness they would be but one God. That which follows is this, that they would be three Gods mutually conscious. For there is no reason why this mutual con-

sciousness should make their Godhead cease, if without this they would be three distinct Gods. No union amounts to identity.

It came in my way to mind you of this more punctual and demonstrative explication of the Trinity, as it is said to be, that you might not expect that every one should be of your mind, nor approve of your modesty as I do.

Your similitude and comparisons are as just as the nature of the subject will admit. The great defect of the first seems to be this, that it cannot be said of any one dimension that it is a cube, or a body; whereas it is said of every person, that he is God.

Your second comparison interferes again with the learned author above-mentioned. For he says, (page 72) "It is a mistake to think that knowledge and power, even in men, is not the same thing;" whereas you suppose them distinct, and upon that ground your similitude.

I cannot but be of your mind in this particular also. For power belongs to the will,* and knowledge to the understanding. And it is plain that we know many things that we cannot do: and, on the contrary, we can do many things and know not how they are done. It may be the ingenious author would be hard put to it to tell us how he pronounces his own name: that is, what organs of speech are moved, and how; by what muscles and nerves; and what the whole action is that intervenes betwixt the inward thought and the outward sound; or betwixt the first cause and the last effect. Or, if he be so good an anatomist and philosopher as to understand all this, at least his little son, or little daughter, who can pronounce the same as well as himself, know not in what manner, or by what means, they do it. So fools and children can move their hands, fingers,

* I should rather say, to the executive faculty; or, power of doing.

and all the members of the body, as well as philosophers ; though they do not know in what method, or by what mechanism, they are moved. These things are the effects of will, independently on knowledge. And it is as plain, on the other hand, that we know how many things are to be done, which yet we cannot do for want of strength or force. I can lift a weight of two or three hundred pounds, but I cannot lift one of five or six hundred ; though I understand as well how the one is moved as the other. And a brawny porter shall raise that of five or six hundred, though he understand staticks less than I do. I can bend a stick, but cannot bend a bar of iron ; though I use just the same method, and understand as much how the one is done as the other. And innumerable instances of like nature shew knowledge and force to be different things. But this, sir, I say only in your defence.

Your conclusion also agrees very well to my sense. And I think them exceedingly to blame that presume to measure these infinite natures, and all their properties, by our narrow understandings. The Anti-Trinitarians generally are no great philosophers ; yet they take upon them as if they were the only masters of reason ; and in the most sublime and mysterious points will scarce allow revelation to be of greater authority than their judgment.

But, however, on the other hand, though I never felt any inclination or temptation to Socinian doctrines, yet, I cannot heartily join with you in the damnatory sentences ; neither would I have us spin creeds, like cobwebs, out of our own bowels. In the name of God, let us be content with what is revealed to us in Scripture concerning these mysteries ; and leave the rest to make part of our heaven and future happiness. To strain things to these heights makes still more divisions in the church. We that now have School-Trinitarians, and Scripture-Trinitarians ; and

either of them will have their plea, and pursue their interest; till, by zeal for opinions which are disputable, we have destroyed Christian charity and unity, which are indispensable virtues and duties.

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I am, Sir,

With sincerity and respect,

Your obliged humble servant,

W. J.*

London, Sept. 23, 1690.

If you know from whom it is, pray thank him from me for his civilities therein. And you may please to tell him, that he doth understand me aright, and puts a true sense upon my words. By personality, I mean that distinction, whatever it be, whereby the three are distinguished; but what that is, I do not pretend to determine. And if I should guess (for it will be but guessing) how it may be, I should not be positive that just so it is. Upon the same account that it is not thought prudent in a siege, to enlarge the line of defence too far. There is a distinction, this we are sure of, between the three: this distinction I call personality; and by this word I mean that distinction, whatever it be. But what this distinction is, or what degree of distinction, I cannot well tell. If this be trifling, I cannot help it, nor if they please to ridicule it; but, to me, it seems to be good sense.

* NORR C.

If others will venture to determine it more nicely than I have done, they, perhaps, may understand it more distinctly than I pretend to do; but will give me leave to be ignorant therein of what the Scripture doth not tell me.

Of the damnatory sentences, as he calls them, I had said nothing; nor do I think that the author of the Athanasian Creed did intend them in that rigour that some would put upon them. And, if it be well considered how there they stand, he will find them annexed, at least so they seem to me, only to some generals which he thought necessary; as that we ought to hold the Catholic faith; that the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped; that the Son of God was incarnate; not to every punctilio in his explications, which are but as a comment on these generals, how he thought they were to be understood, or might be explained; which explications I take to be true and good; but not within the purview of those clauses, and that a man may be saved, even in the judgment of that author, who doth not know, or doth not fully understand, some of them. His true meaning therein seems to me to be but this, that the doctrine therein delivered, concerning the Trinity and the incarnation of Christ, is the sound orthodox doctrine; and such as, for the substance of it, ought to be believed by those who expect salvation by Christ. Certainly his meaning never was, that children, and idiots, and all who do not understand the school

terms, or, perhaps, have never heard them, should be, therefore, denied salvation.

As to what he objects to me, “That it cannot be said of any one dimension that it is a cube, or a body; whereas it is said of every person, that he is God,” he might observe that I had already obviated this objection. For though we cannot say, in the abstract, that length is a cube, and so of the rest; yet, in the concrete, this long thing (or this which is long) is a cube; and so this which is broad, or this which is high, is a cube: just so, we do not say, in the abstract, that paternity is God; but, in the concrete, the Father is God; and so of the other persons. The personality is not said to be God, but the person is. Which fully answers that exception.

What he cites of a learned author falls not within the compass of what I undertook to defend; and that learned person will excuse me, if I do not pretend to understand all his notions, and leave it to him to explain himself.* But what I have endeavoured to defend is as much, I think, as we need to maintain in this point.

Where that author calls it a mistake to think that knowledge and power, in the same man, are not the same thing, I suppose, not having the book at hand, he means no more but this, that though they differ, indeed, (to use the school language) *ex*

parte rei, yet not *ut res et res*, but rather *ut modus et modus*; that is, not as two things, but as two modes of the same thing. And if he should say the like of length, breadth, and thickness, I would not contend about it; for, even so, it will serve my similitude well enough. If that of the three persons be more than so, it is then, I think, such a distinction as to which, in our metaphysics, we have not yet given a name. But of this I determine nothing, because I would not spin the thread too fine; and content myself to say, it is that of the three personalities in one Deity, without determining how great that is. And I may the rather be allowed thus to forbear, because I find, even in matters of ordinary conversation, such as those but now mentioned, the schoolmen are not well agreed what things shall be said to differ *ut res et res*, and what only *ex parte rei*. Much more, therefore, may I be allowed a like latitude of thought in the present case.

I add no more but that

I am,

Yours,

JOHN WALLIS.

LETTER III.

AN EXPLICATION AND VINDICATION OF THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

SIR,

IN pursuance of what I have said in a former letter, concerning what we commonly call the Athanasian Creed, it may not be amiss to express it a little more distinctly.

We call it commonly the Athanasian Creed; not that we are certain it was penned, just in this form, by Athanasius himself; for, of this, I find that learned men are doubtful; but it was penned either by himself, or by some other about that time, according to the mind and doctrine of Athanasius.* In like manner as what we call the Apostles' Creed, we take to be penned, very anciently, according to what doctrine the apostles had taught them, though not perhaps in those very words.

But whoever was the compiler, whether Athanasius himself, or some other, of the Athanasian

* NOTE E.

Creed, I suppose, the damnatory sentences, as they are called, therein were not by him intended to be understood with that rigour that some would now insinuate; who, because perhaps they do not like the main doctrines of that creed, are willing to disparage it, by representing it to the greatest disadvantage they can; as if it were intended, that whoever doth not explicitly and distinctly know, and understand, and assent to, all and every clause and syllable therein, could not be saved; which, I suppose, neither the author did intend, nor any other sober person would affirm: but that the doctrine therein delivered, concerning God and Christ, is sound and true doctrine in itself, and ought, as to the substance of it, to be believed as such by all persons of age and capacity, and who have opportunity of being well informed in it, who do expect salvation by Christ; at least so far as not to disbelieve the substance of it, when understood; there being no other ordinary way to be saved, that we know of, than that by the knowledge and faith of God in Christ.

But what measures God will take in cases extraordinary, as of infancy, incapacity, invincible ignorance, or the like, is not the thing there intended to be declared, nor is it necessary for us to know; but to leave it rather to the wisdom and counsel of God, “whose judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out,” Rom. xi. 33.

Much less do I suppose that he intended to

extend the necessity of such explicit knowledge to the ages before Christ. For many things may be requisite to be explicitly known and believed by us, to whom the gospel is revealed, which were not so to them, before “the veil was taken away from Moses’ face,” and “immortality brought to light through the gospel,” 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14. 2 Tim. i. 10.

Nor are we always to press words according to the utmost rigour that they are possibly capable of; but according to such equitable sense as we use to allow to other homiletical discourses, and which we have reason to believe to have been the true meaning of him whose words they are.

And I have the more reason to press for such equitable construction, because I observe those hard clauses, as they are thought to be, annexed only to some generals; and not to be extended, as I conceive, to every particular in the explication of those generals.

It begins thus, “Whosoever will be saved, before all things, it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith.” Where, before all things, is as much as *imprimis*; importing that it is mainly necessary, or a principal requisite, to believe aright, especially concerning God and Christ.

Which, as to persons of years and discretion, and who have the opportunity of being duly instructed, I think is generally allowed by all of us to be necessary, as to the substantials of religion, in the

ordinary way of salvation, without disputing what God may do in extraordinary cases, or how far God may be pleased, upon a general repentance, as of sins unknown, to pardon some culpable misbelief.

It follows, “Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, (σῶαν καὶ ἀμέμνητον) without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.” That is, as I conceive, unless a person, so qualified and so capacitated, as I before expressed, do keep it whole or sound, as to the substantials of it, though possibly he may be ignorant of some particulars of the true faith, and undefiled, or intemperate, without adding thereunto, or putting such a sense upon such substantials as shall be destructive thereof, shall, except he repent, perish everlastingly. Which, I think, is no more than that of Mark xvi. 16, “He that believeth not shall be damned.” And what limitations or mitigations are there to be allowed, are, by the same equity, to be allowed in the present clause before us; which, therefore, may, in this true sense, be safely admitted.

And here I think fit to observe, that whereas there may be an ambiguity in the English word whole, which sometimes signifies *totus*, and sometimes *sanus* or *salvus*, it is here certainly to be understood in the latter sense, as answering to the Greek σῶος. It is not ἅλγε *totum*, but σῶαν *sanam* or *salvam*. And τηρεῖν σῶαν καὶ ἀμέμνητον, to keep the faith *salvam et intemeratam*, which is translated

whole and undefiled, might, to the same sense, be rendered safe and sound. Now a man may well be said to be safe and sound, notwithstanding a wart or a wen, or even a small hurt or maim, (at least when healed,) so long as the substantials and vitals be not endangered. And so of the Catholic faith, or Christian doctrine, so long as there is nothing destructive of the main substantials or fundamentals of it; though, possibly, there may be an ignorance or mistake as to some particulars of lesser moment.

After this preface (between it and the conclusion, or epilogue) there follows indeed a large exposition of what he declares to be the Catholic faith: that is, to be some part of it; for I take the whole Scripture to be the Catholic faith, whereof this collection is but a part, beginning with, "The Catholic faith is this;" and ending with, "This is the Catholic faith."

But it is not said that except a man know and believe every particular of that explication, he shall perish eternally; but only, "Except he keep the Catholic faith," as to the substantials of it, safe and sound.

For, doubtless, there may be many particulars of Catholic faith contained in the Word of God, which a man may be ignorant of, and yet be saved. It is true, that the name of our Saviour's mother was Mary; and the name of the judge who condemned him was Pontius Pilate; and both these are put into what we call the Apostles' Creed, and are

part of the Catholic faith, and which, supposing that we know them to be declared in Scripture, we ought to believe. But I see not why it should be thought, of itself, more necessary to salvation, if he do not know it to be declared in Scripture, for a man to know that her name was *Mary*, than that the name of Adam's wife was *Eve*, or Abraham's wife *Sarah*, or that one of Job's daughters was called *Jemima*; for all these are declared in Scripture; and, supposing that we know them so to be, ought to be believed as part of the Catholic faith. Nor do I know that it is, of itself, more necessary to know that the name of the judge who condemned our Saviour was *Pontius Pilate*, than that the name of the high-priest was *Caiaphas*. And though one of these, and not the other, be put into the Apostles' Creed, whereby we are more likely to know that than the other; yet both of them being true, and declared in Scripture, they are, both of them, parts of the Catholic faith, and to be believed; but neither of them, I think, with such necessity, as that he who knows them not cannot be saved.

And what I say of this general preface in the beginning, is in like manner to be understood of the general conclusion in the end; "which" Catholic faith "except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved." Of which I shall say more anon.

After the general preface, concerning the necessity of holding the Catholic faith, he proceeds to two main branches of it, that of the Trinity, and

that of the Incarnation, with the consequents thereof, which he declares likewise as what “ought to be believed.”

That of the Trinity he declares thus in general; “And the Catholic faith is this,” that is, this is one main part of the Catholic faith, namely, “That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity: neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance;” which is what we commonly say, “There be three persons, yet but one God.” And this general, which, after some particular explications, he doth resume, is what he declares, “ought to be believed;” but he doth not lay such stress upon each particular of that explication, though true.

He thus explains himself; “For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost:” which persons, therefore, are not to be confounded: “but the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one.” That is, one substance, one God; which is what he said of not dividing the substance, as if the three persons should be three substances, or three Gods. According as Christ says of himself and the Father, John x. 30, “I and the Father are one:” *ἐν ἑσμεν* (not *εἶς*), that is, one thing, one substance, one God, not one person. And 1 John v. 7, “These three are one,” (*ὁμοῦς οἱ τρεῖς, ἐν εἰσι*) *hī tres sunt unum*, not *unus*. These three who’s, are one what. They are one thing, one substance, one God, though three persons.

And as their Godhead, or substance undivided, is all one, so it follows, “the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.” Such as the “Father is,” as to the common Godhead, “such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.” For all these are attributes of the common Deity, which is the same of all. “And yet they are not three Eternals, but one Eternal.” Not three eternal Gods, though three persons, but one eternal God. “As also there are not three Incomprehensibles, nor three Uncreated; but one Uncreated, and one Incomprehensible.” One and the same substance or Deity, uncreated and incomprehensible. “So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty; and yet there are not three Almightyies, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord,” (*κύριος* the word by which the Greeks do express the Hebrew name Jehovah, the proper incommunicable name of God,) “the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord; and yet not three Lords, but one Lord.” (Not three Jehovahs, but one Jehovah.) “For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by

himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden, by the Catholic religion, to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords :” which are so many particular explications, or illustrations, of what was before said in general of “not confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.” Which explications, though they be all true, and necessary consequents of what was before said in general ; yet to none of them is annexed such sanction, as that whosoever doth not believe, or not understand, these illustrations, cannot be saved. It is enough to salvation, if they hold the true faith, as to the substance of it, though in some other form of words, or though they had never heard the Athanasian Creed.

Nor is any such sanction annexed to the personal properties which next follow : “The Father is made of none ; neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone ; not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son ; neither made nor begotten, but proceeding.”

Where, by the way, here is no anathematization of the Greek church,* of which those who would, for other reasons, disparage this creed, make so loud an outcry. It is said indeed, “He doth proceed,” and so say they ; but not that he doth “proceed from the Father and the Son.” And it is said, he is “Of the Father and Of the Son,”

* NOTE F.

(ἀπὸ τῆ πατρὸς καὶ ἀπὸ τῆ υἱοῦ) some way or other; and even this, I suppose, they would not deny; but whether by procession from both, or, if so, whether in the same manner, it is not said, but warily avoided. Though, indeed, it seems to favour what I think to be the truth, and what in the Nicene Creed is said expressly, that he doth “proceed from both;” and, for ought we know, in the same manner, which, yet, we do not determine. Nor do I see any reason why, on this account, we should be said to anathematize the Greek church, or they to anathematize us; even though we should not exactly agree in what sense he may be said to be “Of the Father,” and in what “Of the Son.” And those who are better acquainted with the doctrine and the languages of the present Greek churches than most of us are, do assure us, that the differences between them and us are rather in some forms of expressions, than in the thing itself. However, those who would make so great a matter of this, should rather quarrel at the Nicene Creed, than the Athanasian, where it is expressly said of the Holy Ghost, that “he proceeded from the Father and from the Son.” It is not, therefore, for the phrase *filioque* that they are so ready to quarrel at this Creed rather than the Nicene; but from some other reason, and, most likely, because the doctrine of the Trinity is here more fully expressed than in that, at which the Socinian is most offended.

I observe also, that these personal properties are

expressed just by the Scripture words, beget, begotten, proceeding, without affixing any sense of our own upon them; but leaving them to be understood in such sense as in the Scripture they are to be understood—agreeable to that modest caution, which is proper in such mysteries.

It follows, “So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore or after other:” that is, not in time, though in order. “None is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.” *Σῶται οἱ τρεῖς ὑπόστασεις, καὶ συναΐδιαί εἰσιν ἑαυταῖς, καὶ ἴσαι.* “The three (*οἱ τρεῖς*) are (*σῶται ὑπόστασεις*) truly persons, or properly persons, and co-eternal each with other, and co-equal.”

Having thus finished these particular explications, or illustrations, concerning the Trinity, without any condemning clause of those who think otherwise, other than what is there included, namely, that if this be true, the contrary must be an error; he then resumes the general, (as after a long parenthesis) “So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped.” And to this general annexeth this ratification, “He, therefore, that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity;” or, thus ought to think of the Trinity; or, “let him thus think of the Trinity,” *οὕτω περὶ τριάδος φρονεῖτω.* And to this, I suppose, we do all agree who believe the doctrine

of the Trinity to be true: for, if the thing be true, those who would be saved ought to believe it.

He then proceeds to the doctrine of the Incarnation, which he declares in general as necessary to salvation. "Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ." Which is no more than that of John iii. 36, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." And, therefore, we may safely say this also, "There being no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved, neither is there salvation in any other," Acts iv. 12.

After this, as before he had done of the doctrine of the Trinity, he gives, first, a general assertion of his being God and man; and then a particular illustration of his Incarnation. "For the right faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man."

What follows is a further explication of this general. "God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds. And man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world. Perfect God, and perfect man; of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood. Who, although he be God, and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God. One

altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.”

And thus far, as to the description of Christ’s person and natures. The particulars of which I take to be all true; and, therefore, such as ought to be believed, when understood. But such, many of them, as persons of ordinary capacities, and not acquainted with school terms, may not, perhaps, understand. Nor was it, I presume, the meaning of the penman of this creed, that it should be thought necessary to salvation that every one should particularly understand all this; but, at most, that, when understood, it should not be disbelieved. That in the general being most material, that “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man;” the rest being but explicatory of this: which explications, though they be all true, are not attended with any such clause; as if, without the explicit knowledge of all these a man could not be saved.

He then proceeds to what Christ hath done for our salvation, and what he is to do further at the last judgment, with the consequents thereof: “who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.”

That clause of descending into hell, or hades, (*κατηλθεν εις ᾗδου*), which we meet with here, and in the Apostles’ Creed, as it is now read, is not in the Nicene Creed; nor was it anciently, as learned men seem to be agreed, in what we call the

Apostles' Creed. When, or how, it first came in, I cannot well tell; nor will I undertake here to determine the sense of it.

The Hebrew word *sheol*, and the Greek *hades*, which here we translate hell, by which word we now-a-days use to denote the place of the damned, was anciently used to signify, sometimes the grave, sometimes the place, state, or condition of the dead, whether good or bad. And when Job prays, Job xiv. 13, "O that thou wouldst hide me in *sheol*," (as in the Hebrew,) or in *hades*, (as in the Greek septuagint,) certainly he did not desire to be in what we now call hell; but rather, as we there translate it, in the grave, or the condition of those that are dead.*

But what it should signify here, is not well agreed among learned men. The Papists generally, because that is subservient to some of their beloved tenets, would have it here to signify the place of the damned; and would have it thought that the soul of Christ, during the time his body lay in the grave, was amongst the devils and damned souls in hell. Others do, with more likelihood, take it for the grave, or condition of the dead; and take this of Christ's descending into *hades*, to be the same with his being buried, or lying in the grave.

* The Saxon word *hel* or *helle*, (whence comes the English word hell) doth not properly or necessarily import the place of the damned; but may be indifferently taken for hell, hole, or hollow place, which are all words of the same original. *Helan* (to hide, or cover.) *hole* (cavitas.) *hol* (cavus.) hollow. And when it is used in a restrained sense, it is metonymical, or synecdochical; as when hole or pit is put for the grave, and the like.

The rather, because in the Nicene Creed, where is mention of his being buried, there is no mention of his descent into hell, or *hades*: and here, in the Athanasian Creed, where mention is made of this, there is no mention of his being buried; as if the same were meant by both phrases, which, therefore, need not be repeated. And though in the Apostles' Creed there be now mention of both, yet anciently it was not so; that of his descent into hell being not to be found in ancient copies of the Apostles' Creed. If it signify any thing more than his being buried, it seems most likely to import his continuance in the grave, or the state and condition of the dead, for some time. And the words which follow, ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, say nothing of his coming out of hell, but only of his rising from the dead.

But the words here stand undetermined to any particular sense; and so they do in the Apostles' Creed; and are so also in the articles of our church; where it is only said, (because in the creed it stands so) that we are to believe that he descended into hell, without affixing any particular sense to it.

The words, doubtless, have respect to that of Acts ii. 27, where, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,” or *hades*, “nor suffer thine Holy One to see corruption,” is applied to Christ, cited out of Psalm xvi. 10, where the same had before been spoken of David. And his not being left in *hades*, seems to suppose his having been, for some time, in *hades*, whatever by *hades* is there meant. And

verse 31, “his being not so left,” is expressly expounded of his resurrection. And so again in Acts xiii. 35. Now, as we have no reason to think that David’s being in hell, or *sheol*, though not to be left there, can signify his being in hell among the devils and damned spirits, but rather in the grave, or the condition of the dead; so neither that Christ’s being in hell, or *hades*, which is the Greek word answering to the Hebrew *sheol*, should signify any other than his being in the grave, or condition of the dead, from whence, by his resurrection, he was delivered. And to this purpose seems that whole discourse of Peter, Acts ii. 24—32, and of Paul, Acts xiii. 30—37.

But, without determining it to any particular sense, the creed leaves the word hell indefinitely here to be understood in the same sense, whatever it be, in which it is to be understood in Acts ii. 27, 31, and Psalm xvi. 10. And so far we are safe. So that I take the plain sense of the words to be this—he was for some time in that hell, or *hades*, whatever by that word be meant; wherein, it is expressly said, he was not left, but was raised from it.

It follows, “He ascended into heaven; he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God almighty. From whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies; and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good,

shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire." Of all which, there is no doubt but that it ought to be believed. Ending with, "This is the Catholic faith;" that is, this is true and sound doctrine, and such as every true Christian ought to believe.

And, as he had begun all with a general preface, so now he closeth all with a general conclusion; "Which," Catholic faith, "except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved:" that is, the doctrine here delivered is true, and so I think it is in all the parts of it, and is part of the Catholic faith; the whole of which faith is the whole Word of God: that is, part of that faith which all true Christians do and ought to believe. Which Catholic faith, the whole of which is the whole Word of God, except a man, so qualified as I before expressed, do believe faithfully, (that is, except he truly believe it) as to the substantials of it, though possibly he may be ignorant of many particulars therein, he cannot, without such repentance as God shall accept of, be saved. Which, so limited, as it ought to be, I take to be sound doctrine, and agreeable to that of John iii. 16, "He that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God:" and v. 36, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him:" that is, according to the words of this creed, he that believeth not aright (of God and Christ) cannot be saved.

Which words of Christ we may safely interpret both with an aspect on the doctrine of the Trinity, because of those words, “the only begotten Son of God,” and to that of the Incarnation of Christ, and the consequents thereof; because of those words in the beginning of the discourse, v. 16, 17, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,” &c., and, “God sent his Son into the world, that the world through him might be saved,” which are the two main points insisted on in the Athanasian Creed. And he who doth not believe on the name of this “only begotten Son of God, and thus sent into the world,” the text tells us, “shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Which fully agrees with what is here said, “Except a man believe the Catholic faith,” of which the doctrine of the Trinity and of the Incarnation are there intimated, and are here expressed, to be considerable branches, “he cannot be saved.” And what limitations or mitigations are to be understood in the one place, are reasonably to be allowed as understood in the other: and, consequently, those damnable clauses, as they are called, in the Athanasian Creed, rightly understood, are not so formidable (as some would pretend) as if, because of them, the whole creed ought to be laid aside.

For, in brief, it is but thus—the preface and the epilogue tell us, that “whoso would be saved, it is necessary, or (*Χρῆ*) he ought to hold the Catholic faith. Which faith, except he keep whole and

undefiled, or (*σίαν και ἀνώμωτον*) safe and inviolate, he shall perish everlastingly; or, which except he believe faithfully, he cannot be saved;" which is no more severe than that of our Saviour, Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

He then inserts a large declaration of the Catholic faith, especially as to two main points of it; that of the Trinity, and that of the Incarnation. And if all he there declares be true, as I think it is, we have then no reason to quarrel with it upon that account. But he doth not say, that a man cannot be saved who doth not know or understand every particular thereof.

Of the first, he says but this, "He that would be saved, ought thus to think, or (*ὄτω φρονείτω*) let him thus think of the Trinity; namely, that the Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, ought to be worshipped.

Of the second, what he says is this, "Furthermore it is necessary to eternal salvation, that he believe aright the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ;" which is no more severe than that of our Saviour, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him: because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God, whom God hath sent into the world, that the world through him might be saved," John iii. 17, 18, 36.

Beside these, there are no damnatory clauses in

the whole. All the rest are but declaratory. And, if what he declares be true, we have no reason to find fault with such declaration.

Now as to those two points, that of the Trinity, and that of the Incarnation, which are the only points in question, there is a double inquiry, as I have elsewhere shewed, whether the things be possible; and whether they be true. The possibility may be argued from principles of reason: the truth of them from revelation only. And it is not much questioned but that the revelation, in both points, is clear enough, if the things be not impossible.

As to that of the Trinity, I have already shewed, in a former letter, that there is therein no impossibility, but that what in one consideration are three, which we commonly call three persons, may yet, in another consideration, be one God.

I shall now proceed to shew, that neither is there any impossibility as to the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this consists of two branches—that of his being born of a virgin; and that of the hypostatical union, as it is commonly called, of the human nature with the second person of the sacred Trinity.

As to the former of the two, there can be no pretence of impossibility. For the same God who did at first make Adam of the dust of the earth, without either father or mother, and who made Eve of Adam's rib, without a mother at least, however

Adam may be fancied as a father, and who shall, at the last day, recall the dead out of the dust, may doubtless, if he so please, cause a woman, without the help of man, to conceive a child. There is certainly no impossibility in nature why it may not, by an omnipotent agent, be brought to pass. And when the Scripture declares it so to be, there is no reason, if we believe the Scripture, to disbelieve the thing.

It is no more than when Christ cured “the blind man’s eyes with clay and spittle;”* or when he said, “Lazarus, come forth,”† and he did so; or when “God said, let there be light, and there was light;”‡ and, of the whole creation, “He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast;”|| no more than when he made “Aaron’s rod (a dry stick) to bud, and blossom, and yield almonds;”§ or what is implied in that, “Let not the eunuch say, I am a dry tree;”¶ and not much more than when God gave “Abraham a son in his old age,”** and notwithstanding “the deadness of Sarah’s womb.”††

I was about to say, and it is not much amiss if I do, it is not much more than what pretty often happens amongst men, when God gives both sexes to the same person; such there are, and have been; and I think there is one yet living †† who was first

* John ix. 6.

† John xi. 43, 44.

‡ Genesis i. 3.

|| Psalm xxxiii. 9.

§ Numb. xvii. 8.

¶ Isaiah lvi. 3.

** Genesis xviii. 11, 12.

†† Rom. iv. 19.

‡‡ NOTE G.

as a woman married to a man, and is since as a man married to a woman; and what hinders then, but that God, if he please, may mingle the effects of both these sexes in the same body? A little alteration in the structure of the vessels would do it. For when there is in the same body, and so near, *semen virile et muliebre*, (that which in both sexes contributes to the being of a child) what hinders but there might be a passage for them to mix? And plants, we know, do propagate without a fellow, though it be otherwise in animals. And whereas this is said to be by “the Holy Ghost coming upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowing”* the blessed virgin; it is not much unlike that of the Spirit of God’s incubation, or “moving upon the face of the waters.”† So that, as to this point, here is nothing impossible, nothing incredible.

The other particular, as to the hypostatical union, how God and man can be united in one person, may seem more difficult for us to apprehend, because we understand so little of the Divine essence, and, consequently, are less able to determine what is, and what is not, consistent with it. And, when all is done, if we be never so certain that there is such an union, yet it will be hard to say how it is.

But we have no reason from thence to conclude the thing impossible, because we know not how it is

* Luke 1. 35.

† Genesis 1. 2

done; because there be many other things in nature which we are sure to be, of which we are almost at as great a loss as to the manner how they be, as in the present case.

Solomon, as wise as he was, and how well soever skilled in natural philosophy, doth yet acknowledge himself in many things to be at a loss, when he would search out the bottom of natural things, and even when he made it his business so to do. "When," says he, "I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work of God that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther, though a wise man seek to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it," Eccl. viii. 16, 17. And shall we then say of "the deep things of God,"* the thing is impossible, because we cannot find it out? And if we consider how many puzzling questions God puts to Job, in the 37, 38, 39, 40, 41 chapters of Job, even in natural things, we may very well, as Job did, "abhor ourselves in dust and ashes," and be ashamed of our ignorant curiosity; and confess, as he doth, "I have uttered what I understood not; things too wonderful for me which I know not;" when he found he had "talked like a fool, while he thought to be wise,"† and would measure the

* 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

† Rom. i. 22.

power and wisdom of God by the narrow limits of our understanding; and might come to Job's resolution, when he had well weighed the matter, "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee," Job xlii. 2, 3, 6.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth," not where you please to appoint it, "thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth,"* saith Christ to Nicodemus: but shall we therefore conclude, the wind doth not blow, because we know not how or whence it bloweth? or, that God cannot command the winds, because we cannot? We should rather conclude, the wind doth certainly blow, because we hear the sound of it, though we know neither how, nor whence: and, though they do not obey us, yet "the wind and the seas obey him."† Now, as he there further argues, "If, when he tells us of earthly things, we do not apprehend it, how much more if he tell us of heavenly things?" of "the deep things of God."

But, to come a little nearer to the business, consider we a little the union of our own soul and body. It is hardly accountable, nor, perhaps, conceivable by us, who are mostly conversant with material things, how a spiritual immaterial being, such as our souls are, and capable of a separate existence of its own, should inform, actuate, and

* John iii. 8, 12.

† Matt. viii. 26, 27.

manage a material substance, such as is that of our body, and be so firmly united as to be one person with it. By what handle can a spirit intangible take hold of a tangible material body, and give motion to it? especially if we should admit Lucretius's notion,

Tangere vel tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res,

which he repeats almost as often as Homer doth his τὸν δ' ἀπομειβόμενος, who doth thence repute it impossible for an immaterial being to move a body. But we who believe the soul to be a spirit, know it to be possible. Much more is it possible for God, though a being infinitely more pure, who "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;" and in whom "we live, and move, and have our being;" and who "is not far from every one of us."* It would be hard for us to give an intelligible account, either how God moves all things, or how our soul moves the body; yet we are sure it is so. That a body may move a body seems not so strange to apprehend, for we see one engine move another; but by what mechanism shall a spirit give motion to a body when at rest? or stop it when in motion? or direct its motions this way or that way? It would be thought strange that a thought of ours should move a stone: and it is as hard to conceive, did we not see it daily, how a thought should put

* Acts xvii. 25, 27, 28.

our body in motion, and another thought stop it again. Yet this we see done every day, though we know not how. And it is almost the same thing in other animals. And more yet, when an angel assumes a body. There are none of these things we know how; and yet we know they are done.

I shall press this a little farther. Our soul, we all believe, doth, after death, continue to exist in a separate condition from the body. And, I think, we have reason to believe also that it will continue to act as an intellectual agent, not to remain in a stupid senseless *ψυχόσπαννυχία*, (sleep of the soul) else I see not why Paul should “desire to depart, or to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better, rather than to abide in flesh.”* For while he abides in the flesh he hath some enjoyment of Christ, as well as an opportunity of doing some service, which is more desirable, if, when he is departed, he have none at all: and how can he then say, “That to die is gain?” Whether the soul thus separated shall be said to have a subsistence as well as a separate existence; or, whether it may be properly said then to be an entire person, (as the soul and body are before death, and after the resurrection) I will not dispute; because that were to contend about words, and such words so signify as we please to define them, and bear such a sense as we please to put upon them. But it is,

* Phil. i. 21, 23, 24.

as the angels are, an intellectual, spiritual agent ; and we use to say, *actiones sunt suppositorum* ; and *suppositum rationale*, is either a person, or so near a person, that it would be so if men please to call it so. And the spiritual being which doth now separately exist, shall, at the resurrection, resume a body into the same personality with itself, and shall, with it, become one person, as before death it had been.

Now if a spiritual, immaterial, intellectual being, separately existent by itself, and separately acting as an intellectual agent, may, at the resurrection, assume or reassume a material corporeal being (heterogeneous to itself) into the same personality with itself, or so as to become one person with it, while yet itself remains spiritual as before ; what should hinder, for it is but one step further, but that a divine person may assume humanity into the same personality with itself, without ceasing to be a divine person as before it was ? If it be said, that person and personality in the sacred Trinity are not just the same as what we so call in other cases, it is granted ; and by these words, which are but metaphorical, we mean no more but somewhat analogous thereunto ; and which, because of such analogy, we so call, as knowing no better words to use instead thereof : according as we use the words, Father, Son, generate, beget, and the like, in a metaphorical sense, when applied to God. For no words, borrowed from created beings, can signify just the

same when applied to God, as when they were applied to men, but somewhat analogous thereunto. And if the soul, though we know not how, may and do, at the resurrection, assume a body so as to become the same person with itself, though neither the body be thereby made a soul, nor the soul a body, but remain as before, that a body, and this a soul, though now united into one person; why may not a divine person assume humanity, so to be what is analogous to what we call a person; the humanity remaining humanity, and the divinity remaining divinity, though both united in one Christ, though we do not particularly know how?

We should be at a great loss, if, to answer an Atheist, or one who doth not believe the Scriptures, we were put to it to tell him how God made the world? of what matter? with what tools or engines? or, how a pure spirit could produce matter where none was? He would tell us, perhaps, *ex nihilo nihil, in nihilum nil posse reverti*; where nothing is, nothing can be made; and what once is, though it may be changed, can never become nothing; and will never believe the world was made, but rather was from all eternity, except we can tell him how it was made. Now, if in this case, we may satisfy ourselves, though, perhaps, it will not satisfy him, by saying, God made it, but we know not how, the same must satisfy us here; that Christ was incarnate, (God and man) we are certain, for so the Scripture doth assure us, as well as that God made

the world; but how God made the world, or how the Son of God assumed humanity, we cannot tell: nor indeed is it fit for us to inquire farther than God is pleased to make known to us. All farther than this are but the subtile cobwebs of our brain; fine, but not strong, witty conjectures, how it may be, rather than a clear resolution how it is.

Another objection I have met with, to which the objectors must be contented with the same answer: we know it is, but we know not how. It would be endless for us, and too great a curiosity, to think ourselves able fully to explicate all the hidden things of God. The objection is this: since the three persons cannot be divided, how is it possible that one of them can assume humanity, and not the other? And why the second person, and not the first or third?

As to the question, why? I say it is so, because so it pleased God; and “he giveth not account of his matters;”^{*} he is not accountable to us why he so willeth.

As to the question, how is it possible? I see no difficulty in that at all. The persons are distinguished, though not divided. As in the divine attributes, God’s justice and mercy are distinguishable; though in God they cannot be divided. And, accordingly, some things are said to be effects of his justice, others of his mercy. So the power and

^{*} Job xxxiii. 13.

will of God, both which are individual from himself: but when we say God is omnipotent, we do not say he is omnivolent. He wills, indeed, all things that are, else they could not be, but he doth not will all things possible. And the like of other attributes.

If, therefore, we do but allow as great a distinction between the persons as between the attributes, (and certainly it is not less, but somewhat more) there is no incongruity in ascribing the Incarnation to one of the persons, and not to the rest.

It is asked further, how I can accommodate this to my former similitude of a cube and its three dimensions, representing a possibility of three persons in one Deity. I say, very easily. For it is very possible for one face of a cube, suppose the base, by which I there represented the second person, as generated of the Father, to admit a foil, or dark colour, while the rest of the cube is transparent, without destroying the figure of the cube, or the distinction of its three dimensions, which colour is adventitious to the cube. For the cube was perfect without it, and is not destroyed by it. Which may some way represent Christ's humiliation; who being "equal with God, was made like unto us, and took upon him the form of a servant," Phil. ii. 6, 7.

So that, upon the whole matter, there is no impossibility in the doctrine of the Incarnation, any more than in that of the Trinity. And, supposing them to be not impossible, it is not denied but that

they are, both of them, sufficiently revealed; and, therefore, to be believed, if we believe the Scripture. And of the other articles in the Athanasian Creed there is as little reason to doubt.

There is, therefore, no just exception as to the declarative part of the Athanasian Creed; and, as to the damnatory part, we have before shewed that it is no more severe than other passages in Scripture to the same purpose, and to be understood with the like mitigations as those are. And, consequently, that whole creed, as hitherto, may justly be received.

It is true, there be some expressions in it which, if I were now to pen a creed, I should perhaps choose to leave out; but, being in, they are to be understood according to such sense as we may reasonably suppose to be intended, and according to the language of those times, when they did use to anathematize great errors, which they apprehended to be destructive of the Christian faith, as things of themselves damnable, if not repented of. And, I suppose, no more is here intended; nor of any other errors than such as are destructive of fundamentals.

Yours,

JOHN WALLIS

POSTSCRIPT.

NOVEMBER 15, 1690.

WHEN this third letter was printed, and ready to come abroad, I stopped it a little for this postscript, occasioned by a small treatise which came to my hands, with this title, “Dr. Wallis’s Letter touching the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, answered by his Friend.” It seems I have more friends abroad than I am aware of: but who this friend is, or whether he be a friend, I do not know.* It is to let me understand that a neighbour of his, reputed a Socinian, is not convinced by it; but names some Socinian authors who endeavour to elude Scriptures alleged for the Trinity, by putting some other sense upon them. He might have named as many, if he pleased, who have, to better purpose, written against those authors in vindication of the true sense: and if he should repeat what those have said on the one side, and I say over again what these have said on the other side, we should make a long work of it.

But he knows very well that was not the business of my letter, to discourse the whole controversy at large, either as to the evidence or as to the antiquity of the doctrine: for this I had set aside at

* NOTE H.

first, as done by others to whom I did refer, and confined my discourse to this single point, that there is no impossibility, (which is the Socinians' great objection) but that what in one consideration is three, may in another consideration be one. And if I have sufficiently evinced this, as I think I have, and I do not find that he denies it, I have then done what I there undertook; and, in so doing, have removed the great objection which the Socinians would cast in our way; and, because of which, they think themselves obliged to shuffle off other arguments on this pretence. Now, whether he please to call this a metaphysic or mathematic lecture, certain it is that there are three distinct dimensions, length, breadth, and thickness, in one cube. And if it be so in corporeals, there is no pretence of reason why, in spirituals, it should be thought impossible that there be three somewhats which are but one God: and these somewhats, till he can furnish us with a better name, we are content to call persons, which is the Scripture word, Heb. i. 3; which word we own to be but metaphorical, not signifying just the same here as when applied to men, as also are the words, Father, Son, generate, begot, &c., when applied to God. And more than this need not be said to justify what there I undertook to defend.

Now it is easy for him, if he so please, to burlesque this, or turn it to ridicule, as it is any the most sacred things of God; but not so safe, *ludere*

cum sacris. The sacred Trinity, be it as it will, should by us be used with more reverence than to make sport of it.

I might here end, without saying more; but because he is pleased to make some excursions, beside the business which I undertook to prove, and which he doth not deny, I will follow him in some of them.

He finds fault with the similitude I brought, though very proper to prove what it was brought for, as too high a speculation for the poor labourers in the country, and the tankard bearers in London;* and, therefore, having a mind to be pleasant, he adviseth rather, as a more familiar parallel, to put it thus, "I Mary, take thee Peter, James, and John for my wedded husband," &c., thinking this, I suppose, to be witty. And truly, supposing Peter, James, and John to be the same man, it is not much amiss. But I could tell him, with a little alteration, if their majesties will give me leave to make as bold with their names, as he doth with the names of Christ's mother and of his three disciples which were with him on the mount at his transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 1, it were not absurd to say,

* Yet I believe his tankard bearer is not so dull of apprehension as he would have us think; for if he have ever seen a die, as most of them have, or shall now be shewed one, he may be able to understand, without a metaphysic or mathematic lecture, that in a die there is length, breadth, and thickness, and that it is as broad as it is long, and as thick as either, and yet it is not three dies, but one die: and if he have but as often seen a die as he hath been at a wedding, I see not why this of a die may not be thought as familiar as that of a wedding.

I Mary, take thee Henry William Nassau, without making him to be three men, or three husbands, and without putting her upon any difficulty, as is suggested, how to dispose of her conjugal affection. And when the lords and commons declared him to be King of England, France, and Ireland, they did not intend, by allotting him three distinct kingdoms, to make him three men. And when, for our chancellor, we made choice of James, Duke, Marquess, and Earl of Ormond, though he had three distinct dignities, he was not, therefore, three men, nor three chancellors. And when Tully says, "*Sustineo unus tres personas; meam, adversarii, judicis;*"* which is in English, (that the tankard bearer may understand it) I being one and the same man, do sustain three persons, that of myself, that of my adversary, and that of the judge; he did not become three men by sustaining three persons. And, in this answer to my letter, the friend and his neighbour may, for ought I know, be the same man, though he sustain two persons. And, I hope, some of these resemblances may be so plain, and so familiar, as that he and his tankard bearer may apprehend them, and thence perceive it is not impossible that three may be one. For if, among us, one man may sustain three persons, without being three men, why should it be thought incredible that three Divine persons may be one God, as well as those three other

persons be one man? Nor need he the less believe it for having, as this answerer suggests, been taught it in his catechism, or, as Timothy did the Scriptures, “known them from a child.” But I would not have him then to tell me, the Father is a duke, the Son a marquess, the Holy Ghost an earl, according as he is pleased to prevaricate upon the length, breadth, and thickness of a cube; but thus rather, that God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier are the same God. That God the Creator is omnipotent and all-sufficient; that God the Redeemer is so too; and God the Sanctifier likewise. That God the Creator is to be loved with all our heart, and so God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier: and then there will be no absurdity in all this.

As to what he says, that “all people that have reason enough to understand numbers know the difference between one, and more than one,” I might reply, that all people who can tell money know that three groats are but one shilling, and three nobles are one pound; and what in one consideration is three, may in another consideration be but one; which, if it look like a slight answer, is yet sufficient to such an argument.

He tells me somewhat of Dr. Sherlock, (wherein I am not concerned) and somewhat of the brief history of the Unitarians, of which his neighbour gives the friend a copy; but he doth not tell me, as he might, and, therefore, I tell him, that Dr. Sherlock

hath confuted that history.* But Dr. Sherlock says nothing contrary to what I defend. For, if there be such distinction between the three persons as he assigns, then, at least, there is a distinction, which is what I affirm, without saying how great it is; nor doth he any where deny them to be one God.

He tells me a story of somebody, who, in a public disputation at Oxford, maintaining a thesis against the Socinians,† was baffled by his opponent. Whom, or when, he means, I do not know, and so say nothing to it: but that I may not be in his debt for a story, I shall tell him another, which will be, at least, as much to the purpose as his. It is of their great friend Christophorus Christophori Sandius, a diligent promoter of the Socinian cause. He printed a Latin thesis or discourse against the divinity of the Holy Ghost, which he calls “*Problema Paradoxum de Spiritu Sancto*,” (a Paradox Problem concerning the Holy Ghost) with a general challenge to this purpose, “*Ut siquis in toto orbe eruditorum forte sit, qui doctrinâ magis polleat, quam quibuscum hactenus sit collocutus, ea legat quæ à se publice sint edita argumenta, seque errare moneat, ac rectius sentire doceat.*” (That if in the

* NOTE I.

† Perhaps if he recollect himself he may find that his memory hath failed him, and the thesis which he means was not against the Socinians, but the Arminians; for, it is supposed, he means Dr. Kendal’s thesis, against whom Dr. Wallis disputed in the Act, at Oxford, 1654.

whole world of learned men there be, perchance, some one of greater learning than those with whom he hath discoursed, he is required to read the arguments by him published, to shew him his error and teach him to think better.) Hereupon Wittichius accepts the challenge, and writes against Sandius; to which Sandius answers, taking in another as a partner with him in the disputation: and Wittichius replies; and that with so good success, that Sandius and his partner acknowledged themselves to be convinced by it, and to change their opinion in that point. This happening but a little before Sandius' death, his partner, surviving, published to the world an account hereof, and of Sandius declaring, before his death, that he was so convinced, in a letter of thanks to Wittichius for it. What Sandius would have done further, if he had lived a little longer, we cannot tell. That of Wittichius bears this title, "*Causa Spiritus Sancti, Personæ Divinæ, ejusdem cum Patre et Filio essentialis, (contra C. C. S. Problema Paradoxum,) asserta et defensa, à Christophoro Wittichio. Lugduni Batavorum, apud Arnoldum Doude, 1678.*" The letter of thanks, in 1679, bears this title, "*Epistola ad D. Christophorum Wittichium, Professorem Lugdunensem; qua gratiæ ei habentur pro eruditissimis ipsius in Problema de Spiritu Sancto Animadversionibus: Scripta à Socio Auctoris Problematis Paradoxi: Per quas errores suos rejicere coactus est. Coloniae, apud Joannem Nicolai.*" Beside this letter of thanks

from his partner in the disputation, there was another from Sandius himself, (not printed, but in manuscript) acknowledging a like conviction; of which Wittichius recites an extract in his "*Causa Spiritus Sancti Victrix demonstrata, à Christophoro Wittichio. Lugduni Batavorum, apud Cornelium Boutestein, 1682.*"

He takes it unkindly that I charge it upon some of the Socinians, that though they do not think fit directly to reject the Scriptures, yet think themselves obliged to put such a forced sense upon them, as to make them signify somewhat else; and tells me of some Socinians who have so great a respect for the Scriptures, as to say that "the Scripture contains nothing that is repugnant to manifest reason; and that what doth not agree with reason, hath no place in divinity," &c. But this is still in order to this inference; that, therefore, what they think not agreeable to reason, must not be thought to be the sense of Scripture: and, therefore, that they must put such a force upon the words, how great soever, as to make them comply with their sense. If he except against the words, how great a force soever, as too hard an expression of mine, they are Socinus's own words, in his epistle to Balcerovius, of January 30, 1581, "*Certe contraria sententia adeo mihi et absurda et perniciosa (pace Augustini, &c. dixerim) esse videtur, ut quantumvis potius Pauli verbis sit adhibenda, quam ea admittenda:*" that is, the contrary opinion (with

Augustin's leave, and the rest who are of his mind) seems to me so absurd and pernicious, that we must rather put a force, how great soever, upon Paul's words, that admit it.

And as to the suspicion I had of some of their sentiments, as to spiritual subsistences, that it may not appear to be groundless, he doth, in his epist. 5 *ad Volkeliū*, absolutely deny that the soul, after death, doth subsist; and adds expressly, "*Ostendi me sentire—non ita vivere post hominis ipsius mortem, ut per se præmiorum pœnarumve capax sit:*" that is, that the soul, after death, doth not subsist; nor doth so live as to be in a capacity of being, by itself, rewarded or punished. And how he can then think it an intelligent being I do not see. St. Paul, it seems, was of another mind, when "he had a desire to be dissolved, (or depart hence) and to be with Christ, as being far better for him, than to abide in the flesh," Phil. i. 23, 24; "and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 8. Now I do not understand the advantage of his being with Christ, or being present with the Lord, if he were then to be in a senseless condition, not capable of pain or pleasure, punishment or reward.

In epist. 3 *ad Dudithiū*, we have these words, "*Unusquisque sacræ Scripturæ ex suo ipsius sensu interpres; eaque quæ sibi sic arrident pro veris admittere debet ac tenere, licet universus terrarum orbis in alia omnia iret:*" that is, every one is to

interpret Scripture according to his own sense; and what so seems pleasing to him he is to embrace and maintain, though all the world be against it.

Socinus, in his tract, *de Ecclesia*, page 344, says thus, “*Non attendendum quid homines doceant sentiantre, vel antehac docuerint aut senserint, quicumque illi tandem, aut quotcumque, sint aut fuerint:*” which is pretty plain; I am not, says he, to regard what other men do teach or think, or have before now taught or thought, whosoever they be or have been, or how many soever. And if we doubt whether his whosoever are here to be extended to the sacred writers, he tells us of them in particular elsewhere, “*Ego quidem, etiamsi non semel, sed saepe, id in sacris monumentis scriptum extaret, non idcirco tamen ita rem prorsus se habere crederem,*” Soc. de Jesu Christo servatore, par. 3, cap. 6. Operum tom. ii. page 204. As for me, saith he, though it were to be found written in the sacred monuments, not once, but many times, I would not yet for all that believe it so to be. And a little before, in the same chapter, having before told us that he thought the thing impossible, he adds, “*Cum ea quae fieri non posse aperte constat, divinis etiam oraculis ea facta fuisse in speciem diserte attestantibus, nequaquam admittantur; et idcirco sacra verba, in alium sensum quam ipsa sonant, per inusitatos etiam tropos quandoque explicantur:*” that is, when it doth plainly appear, or when he thinks so, whatever all the world think

beside, that the thing cannot be; then, though the divine oracles do seem expressly to attest it, it must not be admitted; and, therefore, the sacred words are, even by unusual tropes, to be interpreted to another sense than what they speak. Which sayings are, I think, full as much as I had charged him with.

And if these instances be not enough, I could give him more of like nature; but I shall conclude this with one of a later date: at a public disputation at Franeker, October 8, 1686, where, amongst others, this thesis was maintained; *Scripturæ divinitatem non aliunde quam ex ratione adstrui posse; eosque errare, qui asserere sustinent, si ratio aliud quid nobis dictaret quam Scriptura, huic potius esse credendum.* And when Ulricus Huberus, because it was not publicly censured, as he thought it deserved to be, did oppose it in word and writing, the same was further asserted in public disputations and in print, by two other professors in Franeker, in vindication of that former thesis; that “the divine authority of Scripture is no otherwise to be proved but by reason; and if reason do dictate to us ought otherwise than the Scripture doth, it is an error to say that, in such case, we are rather to believe the Scripture.” An account of the whole is to be seen at large in a treatise intituled, “*Ulrici Huberi, Supremæ Frisiorum Curiaë ex-senatoris, de concursu Rationis et Scripturæ Liber. Franakeræ,*

apud Hen. Amama et Zachar. Trædama, 1687; and a breviæ of it in the Leipsic transactions for the month of August, 1687. And, after this, I hope this answerer will not think me too severe in charging such notions on some of the Socinians, while yet I said I was so charitable as to think divers of them were better minded.

But what should make him so angry at what I said of guessing, I cannot imagine. That there is a distinction between the three, we are sure; this I had said before, and the answerer now says it is so; but not such as to make three Gods; this I had said also, and the answerer says so too. That the Father is said to beget, the Son to be begotten, and the Holy Ghost to proceed, I had said also, and I suppose he will not deny, because thus the Scripture tells us: and whatever else the Scripture tells us concerning it, I readily accept. But if it be further asked, beyond what the Scripture teacheth, as, for instance, what this begetting is, or, how the Father doth beget his only begotten Son? this, I say, we do not know, at least I do not, because this, I think, the Scripture doth not tell us; and of this, therefore, I hope this gentleman, as well as the other, will give me leave to be ignorant. Certainly it is not so as when one man begets another; but how it is I cannot tell. And if I should set my thoughts awork, as some others have done, and each according to his own imagination, to guess or

conjecture,* how, perhaps, it may be, I would not be positive that just so it is; because I can but guess or conjecture, I cannot be sure of it. For, I think, it is much the same as if a man born blind, and who had never seen, should employ his fancy to think what kind of thing is light or colour; of which it would be hard for him to have a clear and certain idea. And if this gentleman please to look over it again, I suppose he will see that he had no cause to be so angry that I said, we can but guess herein at what the Scripture doth not teach us.

That the Socinians have set their wits awork to find out other subsidiary arguments and evasions against the Trinity, beside that of its inconsistency with reason, I do not deny; but that is the foundation, and the rest are but props. And if they admit that there is in it no inconsistency with reason, they would easily answer all the other arguments themselves.

I thought not to meddle with any of the texts on either side, because it is beside the scope which I proposed when I confined my discourse to that single point of its not being impossible or incon-

* It is certainly more than (to use the school term) *ratione ratiocinantis*, and I think more than *ratione ratiocinatâ*, as *inadequati conceptus ejusdem rei*, for thus I think the Divine attributes are distinguished and the three persons somewhat more than so, but not *ut res et res*; and though, perhaps, in our metaphysics we have not a term which doth directly answer it, it seems to be somewhat analagous to what we call *ex parte rei*, or *ut modus et modus*, and the Godhead from each *ut res et modus*; but I will not be herein so positive as to require every one else, upon pain of damnation, to think just as I do.

sistent with reason; and did, therefore, set aside other considerations, as having been sufficiently argued by others for more than an hundred years last past. But having already followed him in some of his excursions, I shall briefly consider the two signal places which he singles out as so mainly clear.

In the former of them, John xvii. 3, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,” he puts a fallacy upon us, which, perhaps, he did not see himself, or at least hoped we would not see it; and, therefore, I desire him to consider that it is not said, thee only to be the true God; but thee, the only true God. And so in the Greek, it is not *σε μόνον τόν*, but *σε τόν μόνον ἀληθινόν Θεόν*. The restrictive *μόνον*, only, is not annexed to thee, but to God. To know thee, not thee only, to be the only true God; that is, to be that God beside which God there is no other true God. And we say the like also, that the Father is that God beside which there is no other true God; and say, the Son is also not another God, but the same only true God. And if those words, *ἵνα γινώσκωσί σε τόν μόνον ἀληθινόν Θεόν, καί ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν*, should be thus expounded, “to know thee to be the only true God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ,” (to be the same only true God;) repeating *ἀπό κοινῆ*, those words *τόν μόνον ἀληθινόν Θεόν*, or, thus to know thee and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ, to be

the only true God, he would not like that interpretation; but both the words and the sense will very well bear it, without such force as they are fain to put upon many other places. Or if, without such repetition, we take this to be the scope of the place, to set forth the two great points of the Christian religion, or way to eternal life, that there is but one true God, though in that Godhead there be three persons, as elsewhere appears, in opposition to the many gods of the heathen, and the doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent, of which the heathen were not aware, the sense is very plain; and nothing in it so clear, as he would have us think, against the Trinity, but all very consistent with it.

And the same answer serves to his other place, I Cor. viii. 6, “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; (or for him,) and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” For here also one God may be referred ἀπὸ κοινῆς, both to the Father, if here taken as a distinct person, and to the Lord Jesus Christ; or, without that, it is manifest that one God is here put in opposition, not to the plurality of persons, as we call them, in one Deity, or variety of attributes therein; but to the many gods amongst the heathen; and our one Saviour against their many saviours. As is manifest, if we take the whole context together, “We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other

God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him," v. 4, 5, 6. Where it is evident, that the scope of the place is not to shew either how the persons, as we call them, or how the attributes of that one God are distinguished amongst themselves; but to set our one God, who is the Father or Maker of all things, in opposition to the many gods of the idolatrous world; and our one Saviour or Redeemer against their many saviours. Indeed, if we should set up our Jesus Christ to be another God, the text would be against us; but not when we own him for the same God. So that here is nothing clear in either place, as he pretends, against Christ's being the same God with the Father.

But in that other place of John i, which he labours to elude, the evidence for it doth so stare him in the face, that if he were not, as he speaks, "wilfully blind," or did wink very hard, he must needs see it. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men," v. 1, 2, 3, 4. "He was in the world, and the world was made

by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power (or right, or privilege,) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," v. 10, 11, 12. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth," v. 14. Why he should not think this very clear is very strange, if he were not strangely prepossessed; unless he think nothing clear but such as no man can cavil against. But there can hardly be any thing said so clearly, but that some or other, if they list to be contentious, may cavil at it, or put a forced sense upon it. For thus the whole doctrine of Christ, when himself spake it, and he spake as clearly as he thought fit to speak, was cavilled at; and himself tells us the reason of it, Matt. xiii. 14, 15, and John xii. 37, 38, 39, 40, and after him St. Paul, Acts xxviii. 26, and Rom. xi. 8. Not for want of clear light, but because they shut their eyes. In John xii. it is thus, "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, he hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart,

and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias when he saw his glory and spake of him." And thus in Matt. xiii, "Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." So that it is no argument of a place or doctrine's not being clear, because prejudiced persons are able to pick cavils at it, or put a forced sense upon it.

But let us see what these cavils are. "This I confess," saith he, "were to the purpose, if by the term Word could be meant (he should rather have said, be meant) nothing else but a pre-existing person; and by the term God, nothing but God almighty the Creator of heaven and earth; and if taking those terms in those senses did not make St. John write nonsense."

Now in reply to this, I first take exception to that phrase, "if it could be meant of nothing else." For if his meaning be this, if no caviller can start up another sense, right or wrong, this is no fair play; for hardly can any thing be so plain, but that somebody may find a pretence to cavil at it. It is enough for us, therefore, if it be thus meant, without saying it is impossible to put a forced sense upon it. But this would have spoiled his design in

mustering up a great many forced senses, (not that he thinks them to be true, for surely they be not all true, and I think none of them are) nor telling us which he will stick to; but only that he may cast a mist, and then tell us, which is all that he concludes upon it, the place is obscure, he knows not what to make of it; or rather he knows not how to make it serve his turn.

But when the mist is blown off, and we look upon the words themselves, they seem plain enough as to all the points he mentions. The Word which was with God, and was God, and by whom the world was made, and which was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, and we saw his glory, and of whom John bare witness, must needs be a person; and can be no other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born of the virgin Mary. And this Word which was in the beginning, and by whom the world was made, must needs have been pre-existent before he was so born. And this Word which was with God, (the true God) and was God, and by whom the world was made, and who is one with the Father, John x. 30, and “who is over all, God blessed for ever,”* Rom. ix. 5, is no other

* What we render who is, in Rom. ix. 5, is in the Greek, not *ὁς ἐστι*, but *ὁ ὢν*, (he that is) which in Rev. i. 4, (*ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος*, &c.) and elsewhere, is used as a peculiar name or title proper to God almighty, and answers to I AM, Exod. iii. 14. “I AM hath sent me unto you,” of the same import with Jah and Jehovah. And what is said of God indefinitely, without respect to this or that person in the Godhead, at Rev. i. 4, (for Christ in particular is contradistinguished, v. 5) *ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος, καὶ ὁ ὢν*,

god than God almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. And this plain sense the words bear, without any force put upon them, without any incoherence, inconsistency, or contradiction; save that they do not agree with the Socinian doctrine. And there is no other way to avoid it, but what Socinus adviseth in another case, "*Quantacunque vis verbis adhibenda;*" putting a force upon the words, no matter how great, to make them not to signify what they plainly do; or else to say, which is his last refuge, that St. John writes nonsense.

But let him then consider whether this do savour of that respect which he would have us think they have for the Holy Scripture; and whether we have not reason to suspect the contrary of some of them; and whether we have not reason to complain of their putting a forced sense upon plain words, to make them comply with their doctrine; and lastly, whether it be not manifest that the true bottom

καὶ ὁ ἄρχόμενος, (from him that is, and was, and is to come) is at v. 8 applied in particular to Christ, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord, which is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty," which closeth the description of Christ that begins at v. 5. And that, by the Lord, is here meant Christ is evident from the whole context, v. 11, 13, 17, 18, (he that was dead and is alive) and the whole second and third chapters. And so the description of Christ, Rom. ix. 5, *ὁ ἄν ὅτι πάντων Θεὸς ἐνδοξοῦτος εἰς πρὸς αἰῶνας, Ἀμήν*, in its full emphasis is thus, "that BEING over all, (or, the Supreme Being) God blessed for ever, (or, the ever blessed God) Amen," which is used as a character of the Supreme God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Mark xiv. 61, when the high-priest asked him, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And there will be need of Socinus's expedient, "*quantacunque vis Pauli verbis adhibenda,*" to make it signify any other god than God almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth.

of their aversion from the Trinity, whatever other subsidiary reasons they may allege, is, because they think it nonsense, or not agreeable with their reason. For, set this aside, and all the rest is plain enough; but, because of this, they scruple not to put the greatest force upon Scripture. Nor is there any other pretence of nonsense in the whole discourse, save that he thinks the doctrine of the Trinity to be nonsense: so that the whole controversy with him turns upon this single point, whether there be such impossibility or inconsistency as is pretended.

That of 1 John v. 7, “There be three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one,” is wanting, he says, in some copies. And it is so; and so are some whole epistles wanting in some copies; a good part of a chapter, as that of the woman taken in adultery, in the Gothic gospels, John viii, and the latter part of St. Mark, last chapter, is wanting in some copies, and the doxology at the end of the Lord’s prayer; but we will not for that quit the place; for we have great reason to think it genuine.* If this difference of copies happened at first by chance, upon an oversight in the transcriber, in some one copy, and thereupon in all that were transcribed from thence, it is much more likely for

* NOTE K.

a transcriber to leave out a line or two which is in his copy, than to put in a line or two which is not. And if it were upon design, it is much more likely that the Arians should purposely leave it out, in some of their copies, than the Orthodox foist it in. Nor was there need of such falsification; since *ὁ υἱὸς ἐσμεν* concludes as strongly, as to a plurality of persons, and of the Son in particular, which was the chief controversy with the Arians, as *ὁ υἱὸς ἐστίν* doth as to all the three. And, I think, it is cited by Cyprian, in his book *de unitate Ecclesiæ*, before the Arian controversy was on foot. And, therefore, if it were done designedly, and not by chance, it seems rather to be razed out by the Arians, than thrust in by the Orthodox. And the language of this in the epistle suits so well with that of the same author in his gospel, that it is a strong presumption that they are both from the same pen. The Word, in 1 John v. 7, agrees so well with the Word in John i, and is peculiar to St. John; and *ὁ υἱὸς ἐστίν*, in 1 John v. 7, with *ὁ υἱὸς ἐσμεν* in John x. 30, “These three are one,” with “I and the Father are one,” that I do not at all doubt its being genuine. And that evasion of his, these three are one, that is, one in testimony, will have no pretence in the other place, where there is no discourse of testimony at all: but “I and the Father are one,” *unum sumus*, must be one thing, one in being, one in essence; for so adjectives in the neuter gender, put without

a substantive, do usually signify both in Greek and Latin : and there must be some manifest reason to the contrary that should induce us to put another sense upon them.

The other place, Matt. xxviii. 19, “Baptizing them in (or, into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” is not so slight an evidence as he would make it. For whether *εις τὸ ὄνομα* (not *εις τὰ ὀνόματα*) be rendered in the name, and taken to denote the joint authority of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost admitting the person baptized into the Christian church ; or, into the name, which this answerer seems to like better, and taken to denote the dedication of the person baptized to the joint service or worship of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (baptism itself being also a part of divine worship,) they are all conjoined, either as in joint authority, or as joint objects of the same religious worship, and, for aught that appears, in the same degree. And Socinus himself doth allow the Son to be worshipped with religious worship, as adoration, and invocation, as lawful at least, if not necessary. Now when this answerer tells us of the first commandment, “Thou shalt have no other god but me,” (the God of Israel) he might as well have remembered that of Christ, Matt. iv. 10, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve ;” and, therefore, since Socinus, and other of his followers, do allow Christ

to be worshipped, they must allow him to be God, even the God of Israel, and I am mistaken, if he be not expressly called “the Lord God of Israel.” Luke i. 16, “Many of the children of Israel shall he (John the Baptist) turn to the Lord their God; for he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias,” &c. Now he before whom John the Baptist was to go in the spirit and power of Elias, is agreed to be our Lord Jesus Christ; it is, therefore, he that is here called the Lord God of Israel. And we who own him so to be, worship no other God in worshipping him. It is those who do not own him so to be, and do yet worship him, that are to be charged with worshipping another God. Now when here we find Father, Son, and Holy Ghost all joined in the same worship, we have reason to take them all for the same God, and that “these three are one;” and do say, as willingly as he, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God.” Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are but one God: as God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier, are one God; and what in the Old Testament are said of God, indefinitely, without taking notice of this or that of the three persons, are, in the New Testament, attributed some to one, some to another, of the three persons.

That which makes these expressions seem harsh to some of these men is, because they have used themselves to fancy that notion only of the word

person, according to which three men are accounted to be three persons, and these three persons to be three men. But he may consider that there is another notion of the word person, and in common use too, wherein the same man may be said to sustain divers persons, and those persons to be the same man; that is, the same man as sustaining divers capacities, as was said but now of Tully, *tres personas unus sustineo*.* And then it will seem no more harsh to say, the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God, than to say, God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier are one God; which, I suppose, even to this answerer would not seem harsh, or be thought nonsense. It is much the same thing, whether of the two forms we use. And all the cavils he useth may be equally applied to either. What answer, therefore, he would give to one who should thus object against the latter form, will serve us as well to what he objects against the former.

If, therefore, the gentleman please to consider it calmly, he will find that, even amongst men, though another person do many times denote another man, and thereupon the words are sometimes used promiscuously, yet not always, nor doth the word person necessarily imply it. A king and a husband, though they imply very different notions, different

* NOTE L.

capacities, different relations, or different personalities, yet may both concur in the same man; or, in that sense wherein person is put for man, in the same person. So a king and a father, a king and a brother, and the like. And this gentleman, though in the dialogue he sustain two persons, that of an opponent and that of an answerer, or that of a friend and that of an adversary, that so while one gives ill language, the other may give up the cause, and while one reads it with great satisfaction and is convinced by it, the other is not convinced; yet they do not act each their own part so covertly, but that sometime the vizard falls off and discovers the man to be the same. For though my letter be answered by a friend; (page 1) yet it is the neighbour that is weary of writing, (page 13).

Now, if person, in a proper sense, when applied to men, do not imply that different persons must needs be so many different men, much less should it be thought nonsense, when, in a metaphorical sense, it is applied to God, that different persons in the Deity should not imply so many Gods; or, that three somewhats, which we call persons, may be one God; which is what I undertook to prove.

And, having made this good, I need not trouble myself to name more texts, though many more there be which give concurrent evidence to this truth, or discourse the whole controversy at large, which was not the design of my letter; for himself

hath reduced it to this single point—when St. John says, “The Word was with God, and the Word was God;” if by the Word be meant Christ, and by God, the true God, whether, in so saying, St. John do not speak nonsense? And if I evince this not to be nonsense, as I think I have done, he grants the place is to the purpose, which quite destroys the foundation of the Socinian doctrine, without being obliged to prove that these persons are just such persons, and so distinct, as what we sometimes call persons amongst men, but with such distinction only as is agreeable to the Divine nature, and not such as to make them three Gods. Like as when God the Father is said to beget the Son; not so as one man begets another, nor is the Son so a son as what we call son amongst men; but so as suits with the Divine nature, which, how it is, we do not perfectly comprehend.

I have now done with him. But I have one thing to note upon what I have before said of the Athanasian Creed. I there read it, *σῶναι ὁὶ τρεῖς ὑπόστασεις, καὶ συννάδιαι εἰσι, καὶ ἴσαι*, because I so find it in the copy I used, which is that at the end of the Greek Testament in octavo, printed at London by John Bill, 1622, with Robert Stephan’s, Joseph Scaliger’s, and Isaac Casaubon’s Annotations. But in Whitaker’s Greek Testament, reprinted by this copy, 1633, I since find it is *αὶ τρεῖς*, which edition,

I suppose, is followed by some others.* I take the former to be the better reading, as giving a clearer sense; and that the corrector of the press had put *ái* for *ói*, intending thereby to mend the Greek syntax, because *ὑπόστασις* follows; but doth, I think, impair the sense. But as to the doctrine, it is much one whether we read *ái* or *ói*. And what I have said of that whole creed is chiefly intended for those who do believe the doctrine of the Trinity, and of Christ's Incarnation, that there is no reason, in my opinion, why they should not allow of that creed. But such as do not believe those points, cannot, I grant, approve the creed; and it is these, I suppose, who would fain have others to dislike it also.

* NOTE M.

A FOURTH LETTER
CONCERNING
THE SACRED TRINITY,
IN REPLY TO WHAT IS INTITLED
AN ANSWER TO DR. WALLIS'S THREE LETTERS.
BY JOHN WALLIS, D.D.

[PUBLISHED IN 1691.]

LETTER IV.

CONCERNING THE SACRED TRINITY.

SIR,

IN a former answer, from I know not whom, to my first and second letter, we had two persons (a friend and his neighbour) in one man; of which I have given account in my third letter. We have now an answer to that also; but whether from the friend, or the neighbour, or from a third person, he doth not tell me: yet all the three persons may, for aught I know, be the same man.

However, whether it be or be not the same man, it is not amiss for him to act a third person, as of an adversary, as being thereby not obliged to insist upon and maintain what was before said; but may fairly decline it, if he please. The one may grant what the other denies, and deny what the other grants; and still, as the scene changes, the man may act another person. And so I find it is. As for instance:

The former answerer takes it unkindly, and would

have it thought a calumny, that I charged it on some of the Socinians, “That how clear soever the expressions of Scripture be for our purpose, they will not believe it, as being inconsistent with natural reason: and though they do not think fit to give us a barefaced rejection of Scripture, yet they do, and must, they tell us, put such a forced sense on the words, as to make them signify somewhat else,” (page 72). Therefore, to shew that this is not a calumny, but a clear truth, I cited their own words, and quoted the places where they are to be found, wherein themselves say the same things in as full expressions as any that I had charged them with: “That every one is to interpret the Scripture according to his own sense; and what so seems grateful to him he is to embrace and maintain, though the whole world be against it: that he is not to heed what men teach or think, or have at any time taught or thought, whoever they be, or have been, or how many soever: that though, even in the sacred monuments, it be found written, not once only, but many times, he should not yet for all that believe it so to be: that what plainly appears cannot be, (or, as was before explained, what he thinks so, though all the world beside think otherwise,) is not to be admitted, even though in the sacred oracles it appear to be expressly affirmed; but those sacred words are to be interpreted, though it be by unusual ways or tropes, to some other sense than what they speak: that, because it seems

to him absurd, he must, with Augustin's good leave, and of the rest who think as he doth, put a force, how great soever, upon Paul's words, rather than to admit such sense: that, if our reason dictate to us aught otherwise than the Scripture doth, it is an error to say, that in such case we are rather to believe the Scripture," (pages 73, 74, 75). Now our new answerer, though he would still have it to be a calumny, shuffles it off with this, "He is not concerned that Socinus, or any other author, has dropt imprudent words, and leaves it to the Socinian to answer;" (page 10) for he is now to act the Arian, (pages 11, 12, 14, 16, 17). This point, therefore, I look upon as yielded, concerning the slight opinion which some of the Socinians have of Scripture, in competition with human reason.

Again, when I had spoken of our immortal soul, in its separate existence after death, as of an intellectual being, (but with an *if* at least those who deny the blessed Trinity will allow that there are such beings) to shew the suspicion intimated was not groundless, I cited Socinus's own words, (page 73) where he expressly tells us "that the soul, after death, doth not subsist, nor doth so live as to be then in a capacity of being rewarded or punished;" that is, in effect, it is no more alive than is the dead body, not sensible of pain or pleasure; which, I think, is ground enough for such a suspicion, without being uncharitable. Nor doth this new answerer clear Socinus, or himself, from this sus-

picion; he only tells us, (page 10) it is an insinuation, as if they believe not angels, which is nothing to the purpose of the soul's separate existence, which is that I insisted on; nor doth he so much as tell us that he doth believe angels, much less that he doth believe the soul's separate existence; so that the ground of suspicion still remains. I had shewed him how different Socinus's opinion is from that of St. Paul, when he "desired to be dissolved, (or to depart hence) and to be with Christ, as much better for him than to abide in the flesh," Phil. i. 23, 24; and "to be absent from the body, (which must be after death, and before the resurrection) and to be present with the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 8. And this new answerer, though he takes notice of the charge, doth not so much as tell us that he is not of Socinus's opinion herein; which, if it be so, he might reasonably have told us upon this occasion. I might have added that of Christ, Matt. x. 28, "Fear not those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul:" whereas, if the soul, after death, be as insensible as the body, that is as much killed as this: and that of Christ to the converted thief on the cross, Luke xxiii. 43, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise:" for, surely, by paradise he did not mean purgatory; nor yet that he should be with him in hell amongst the devils and the damned; nor that his soul should be in a condition as senseless as his body; for paradise doth not sound like any of these. I might have

added also that of Lazarus and the rich glutton, Luke xvi. 23, 24, 25, 28. For though parables are not strongly argumentative, as to all the punctilios of them; yet, as to the main scope of them, they are; else to what purpose are they used? Now here we have that glutton represented as tormented in hell, and Lazarus at rest in Abraham's bosom, and there comforted, while the other is tormented; and all this while yet he had brethren upon earth to whom he desires Lazarus might be sent. All which is not agreeable to a condition not capable of reward or punishment. And, upon the whole, we have reason to suspect that Socinians may have some other odd tenets which they think fit rather to conceal than to deny: so that I look upon this point as gained also, that Socinus, uncontrolled by this answerer, doth deny the subsistence of the soul after death, as then capable of reward or punishment.*

Another point which I look upon as granted, is concerning that place, John i, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us." Concerning this place we were come to this issue with our former answerer, (at his page 9) if by Word be meant a person, pre-existent to Christ's Incarnation by the virgin Mary; and by God be meant the true God, or

* NOTE N.

God almighty, then this place is to our purpose; for else, he tells us, St. John writes nonsense. Now that St. John writes nonsense, I suppose he will not say, whatever he thinks, because he pretends a great reverence for the Scriptures, and doth not take it kindly that I should suspect the contrary. Whether of the other two points he would stick to he did not think fit to tell us; for, indeed, his business was not to tell us what he would have, but what he would not have, and concludes nothing thereupon, but that the place is obscure; (he knows not how to make it serve his turn) and that it may so seem, he endeavours to cast what dust he can into the spring, and then to say the water is not clear. I have given him my reasons, and I think they be cogent, why I judge the place clear enough, as to both points; and should I admit, as I think I may, that by Word is meant somewhat else, as he tells us, in forty other places, this is nothing to the purpose. For we are not here inquiring what by the word *λογος* is meant in Aristotle, or what in Plato, or what in forty other places, but what is meant by the Word in this place; nor what by gods is meant in Psalm lxxxii. 6, 7, "I have said ye are gods, but ye shall die like men:" but what by God is here meant, where it is said, "the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Nor is here any need of a rhetoric lecture to inquire by what trope or figure, or with what allusion, Christ is here called the Word; it is enough that it is Christ

who is here so called. And after all his talk, I do not find that himself hath the confidence to deny, though he doth not think fit to grant it, but that here by the Word is meant Christ, and that God here mentioned is God almighty; and, consequently, if St. John do not write nonsense, as he is pleased to phrase it, the place is to our purpose. Now our new answerer seems to me to quit the first of these points, and chooseth rather to act the Arian than the Socinian, as taking that to be more defensible; (pages 11, 14, 17) and doth admit that by the Word here is meant the person of Christ, and pre-existent to his Incarnation, as by whom the world was made, at least as by an instrument; and doth allow him to be God, though not the same God; but that the Father and the Word are two Gods; (page 17) and can allow him the character of being over all, God blessed for ever; and can so be as liberal of the title of God to Christ as any Trinitarian whatever; (page 16) so that now the dispute is reduced to this—when it is said, “the Word (meaning Christ) was with God, and the Word was God,” whether by God be meant the true God, God almighty. Of which we are to say more anon.

Another grant we have, (page 3) where he doth admit that a thing may be *unum* and *tres*, (one and three) in several respects: and that it is true, indeed, he cannot say, that there is a contradiction in holding that there may be three persons in God.

And, in granting this, he grants what I undertook to prove. For he knows very well, that the business which I undertook was not to discourse the whole controversy at large; but so stated the question as to confine it to this single point, whether it be an impossibility, or inconsistency with reason, that there may be three somewhats, which we call persons, which are but one God? And when he grants me that there is in it no contradiction, or inconsistency with reason, all the rest is beside the question. I know very well, that both this and the former answerer have made it their business to change the state of the question; and if what I bring to prove what I undertake do not prove the task they set me, they glory as if they had the better. But the lawyers tell us, that when issue is once joined, if we prove the thing in issue we carry the cause; and what is more than so is over and above, or to spare. And a mathematician, if he prove what he proposeth, concludes with *quod erat demonstrandum*; (he hath proved what he undertook to prove) if he prove more than so, it is more than he was obliged to do. And if a logician prove (*propositionem negatam*) the proposition which is incumbent on him to prove, he hath done his work; and if he prove more than so, it is more than he need to do. And accordingly, when this answerer doth acknowledge that I have proved what I undertake to prove, that there is no impossibility, there is no contradiction, nor inconsistency with reason, that

three somewhats may be one God, he ought to acquiesce therein, and acknowledge that I have done my work. For when the controversy was divided into two branches, whether the thing be true, and whether it be possible, (and it was the latter of the two that I undertook) if I have shewed it is not impossible, which this answerer doth grant that I have done, I have done the work that I undertook; and if this be once agreed, it goes a great way as to the other branch, that the thing is true. For I find the last result of our adversaries, when they are close pressed, is commonly this, it is impossible, it is absurd, it is nonsense, it is inconsistent with reason, and, therefore, it cannot be true; and that, therefore, a force, no matter how great, must be put upon the words which do, how expressly soever, affirm it, to make them signify somewhat else than what they plainly do signify, than to admit it. And if I have, as is now confessed, destroyed this last reserve, let them press this point no more. Or, if they will retract this grant, let the next answerer keep to this point, to prove it impossible, or inconsistent with reason, and not ramble out into other discourses which are nothing to the purpose of what I proposed to prove.

Amongst his other concessions, I shall reckon that in page 14, where he argues from John xvi. 13, that there is between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost a distinction so great, as that they

may not unfitly be called three persons, where I observe also, that he owns the personality of the Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father, and of the Son. It is true, indeed, he seems to make the distinction between them greater than I do. But I thus far agree with him, that there is, in truth, a distinction, and that more than imaginary, or what depends only upon our imagination, and greater than that of what we call the Divine attributes; and, therefore, we reckon the persons to be but three, but the attributes to be more; and we do admit, amongst the persons, a certain order or economy, such as in the Scripture we find assigned to them, but do not own the distinction so great as to make them three Gods.

And that also of pages 13, 14, where he argues, that Christ is indeed God, not only a dignified man: "That God in Christ was tempted, suffered, and died; not man only. That the merits thereof are founded on the Godhead. In plain terms," saith he, "if Christ were only a man, extraordinarily assisted by God, and thereupon merited by his sufferings and death, it was the man redeemed us by his blood, and not God." And page 16, the like from Rom. ix. 5, "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever;" and asks, "If I ever knew an Unitarian, especially an Arian, deny him that character?" And from Heb. i. 8, "To the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, endureth for ever; a sceptre of

righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom," &c. he argues, "That it is not the humanity of Christ that is here spoken of. For what! Is the humanity of Christ called God? Is the humanity preferred before angels? Or, did the humanity frame the world? Indeed," he says, "they are apt to clog it with a limitation, as not acknowledging him co-equal with the Father; but under that restriction they can be as liberal of the title of God to Christ as any Trinitarian whatever." Where I take what he grants; and as to the co-equality, shall discourse it afterwards.

More of this kind I shall have occasion to mention afterward; yet do not blame him for taking this advantage, of shifting the person where he sees cause to grant what was before denied.

But our new answerer hath yet another art. When he seems to cite what I say, he takes the liberty very often to vary therein, according as he thinks fit, both from my words and from my sense, and, therefore, I desire the reader not to take all as mine which seems to be cited as such; but so much only as he finds to be truly cited. It would be too long to mention all the places where I am so used. I shall only give instance in some of them.

He tells us, (page 4) that I endeavour to illustrate the Trinity by an example in a cube, or die; and so far he says true; but not so in what follows, where three sides, he says, make one cube; and which cube, he says, is not to be made without all

the three sides. But certainly he can no where find these to be my words. I confess I am no great gamester at that sport; but I always thought, till now, that a die had six sides, and not only three. I have said, indeed, that in a cube, or die, there be three dimensions, length, breadth, and thickness; but I never called these the three sides of a cube, nor have I any where said that a cube hath but three sides.

I am represented (pages 5, 6, 7, 8) as maintaining three personal Gods: but he knows very well this is not my language, but that the three persons are one God, not three Gods, nor a council of Gods, as he calls it.

So, where he would ask the doctor, (page 17) whether these two Gods, to wit, the Father and the Word, be one? he knows my answer must be, that these two, not these two Gods, are one God; and that I do no where call them two Gods, but one and the same God, according to that of Christ himself, "I and the Father are one."

So, where he talks of adding several persons to our one God; (pages 3, 8) for he knows that is not my language, but these three are God; not that they are added to God; much less that Bacchus and Venus, &c. may be thrust into the number; and (page 8) one of your Gods: we have but one God. It is he and his Arian that own two Gods, (page 17) not we.

Another there is which runs through most part

of his whole discourse, wherein he wilfully mistakes the state of the question: and then, what is brought to prove one thing he misapplies as brought to prove another, and then makes a great outcry that it doth not prove what it was never brought to prove; and this he calls cross purposes. He knows very well that the question was by me clearly stated, not as to the whole doctrine of the Trinity at large, but as to the possibility. That, whatever the Socinians pretend, there is no impossibility, nonsense, or inconsistence with reason, that three somewhats, which we call persons, may be one God; and this he owns to be the state of the question, (page 1) to prove the same agreeable to the common notions of human reason; and it is done by shewing that, according to the common notions of human reason, nothing is more common than that what in one consideration are three, or many, is yet in another consideration but one. Thus in one cube there be three dimensions, length, breadth, and thickness. So the understanding, will, and memory, in one soul. So the *νοερόν, επιθυμητικόν* and *κινητικόν* a power to know, to will, and to do, in the same intelligent agent, and the like. It is, therefore, not inconsistent with reason, and this answerer doth allow it, for one to be three; nor is it nonsense to say, these three are one; or I and the Father are one; or that three somewhats may be one God. The former answerer complains of these resemblances as impossible to be apprehended by

the common people; and desires some more familiar parallel than that of a cube, or die, that the tankard bearer may apprehend, (in his pages 8, 9). Yet I believe his tankard bearer is not so dull of apprehension as he would have us think. For if he have ever seen a die, as most of them have, or shall now be shewed one, he may be able to apprehend, without a metaphysic or mathematic lecture, that in a die there is length, breadth, and thickness, and that it is as broad as it is long, and as thick as either; and yet it is not three dies, but one die. However, to gratify his request, I have given him some other; as that the same man may have three dignities, or three kingdoms, and sustain three persons, or three relations, without thereby becoming three men, with other like. With this, our new answerer is not pleased. He is ashamed, he doth blush for me, &c. How much am I obliged for this his great compassion! But all this is but banter, it is not argument, and no sober man will be more of his opinion for this language; and much less for that of St. John's writing nonsense, of a lying revelation, of a three-headed monster, (pages 3, 5) and other such indecent language of God and the Scripture. But, why so displeased with these similes? These are too mean, too familiar; he expected somewhat higher, somewhat more distinct, (page 5). I see it is as hard a matter to please my two answerers, as to serve two masters: the one complains my similes are not familiar enough; the other that they are

too familiar; he expected somewhat more sublime. These do not prove that a Trinity in Unity is necessary to the perfection of the Godhead, (page 6). True: these alone do not prove that there is a Trinity in Unity in the Godhead; much less do they prove that a Trinity in Unity is necessary to the perfection of the Godhead; nor were they brought to prove it. They were brought to prove there is no inconsistency, but that there may be a Trinity in the Unity of the Godhead; and if they prove thus much, he, perhaps, may have cause to be ashamed, but I see no reason why I should be ashamed, or any one for me. Now, that they prove thus much, he hath already granted that a thing may be one and three in divers respects; and that it is no contradiction to hold that there may be three persons in God. They have proved, therefore, what they were brought to prove. But, says he, (page 5) "Our debate is not whether there may be three persons in God." Yes: our debate is whether there may be; not whether there be. And he knows the question was so stated by me, and so acknowledged by himself, upon this single point, whether there be any impossibility in it; and so owned by himself, (page 1) not whether it be so, for this I had before said was not to be argued upon the topic of reason alone; but whether it be agreeable to the common notions of human reason that it may be so: and if this were the question, as he owns, and this be proved, as he owns also, then

I have proved what I undertook to prove, and have no reason to be ashamed, either of the undertaking or of the proof. It is our new answerer who doth wittingly and willingly misstate the question, that is at cross purposes, while he applies those arguments to one point which he knows were brought to prove another, which point himself grants to be proved; he cannot say there is a contradiction in it, (page 6) and then complains, that they alone do not prove what they were never brought to prove.

Of like nature is that other point, where he tells us that we do now venture to prove it to be agreeable to the common notions of human reason; that is, not inconsistent with it. And we do so. But he would have it thought that it is but now of late that any have presumed to this confidence; (pages 1, 2) and would have us content modestly to acknowledge it a mere mystery, and to rely upon the authority of the church and tradition, without pretending that it is agreeable to reason. Now, that there is in it a mystery we readily grant, and so there is in the whole doctrine of our redemption; "God manifested in the flesh," &c., 1 Tim. iii. 16, as that which, without revelation, we could not have found out by mere reason; and that it is above reason, that is, more than what reason alone could have taught us, but not that it is against reason, or inconsistent with it. This is not the doctrine of the Trinitarians, nor ever was, that I know of. Nor is it tradition only, or the church's authority, but the

authority of Scripture that we rely upon, which is a true, not a lying revelation. Nor is it, as he pretends, a new doctrine, not raised till several hundred years after Christ, as if the doctrine were to be dated from the time of penning the Athanasian Creed, but as old, at least, as the New Testament, and never contested, that I know of, till several hundred years after Christ, when the Arians arose. But here again my answerers are not agreed, so hard it is to please them both; while one complains, it is but of late, the other tells me, it is old fashioned, (in his page 9) “ Thus Dr. Wallis may see that his notions concerning the Trinity are old fashioned, not of a new mode.” And truly I take him to be more in the right, that it is not a new quirk, but old fashioned doctrine; and I like it never the worse for being so. As to what I have said of John xvii. 3, it is more than forty years, and and well towards fifty, since I first preached it in London, on that text, as I have since done there and elsewhere, more than once, and I did not then take it to be new, but what I had been always taught; and as to that of the three dimensions in a cube, it is forty years or more since I first discoursed it at Oxford with Dr. Ward, then Astronomy-Professor there, and since Bishop of Salisbury; and as to the doctrine in general, of three persons in one God, it is no newer than the New Testament. But here again our answerer forsakes the question: for the question is not whether it be a new or old

adventure; but whether it be inconsistent with reason that three may be one; or, as he words it, (page 3) that a Trinity in Unity is absurd.

Another piece of the same art it is where my word of personality is by him changed for personation; (pages 5, 6) for which I would not have quarrelled with him, if by changing the word, he had not meant to change the sense also. For to personate a man, he tells us, (page 6) is but to compose one's actions in likeness of him; and that one cannot personate three together, but one after another. But my personality, he knows, is more than this personation; it is not only acting a person, but being a person. A man may successively personate, or act the person of a king and a father, without being either this or that: but when the same man *is* both a king and a father, which he may be at the same time, as well as successively, this is more than only to act them. And if by personation he mean no more than acting a person, I wonder how he can tell us, (page 5) that personation is the greatest perfection of being; and that he never could apprehend any other real unity but personation. What? No real unity but acting a person by imitation? Sure there is. The bottom, and top, and middle of a mountain are one mountain; yet I do not take mount Atlas to be a person, or to act a person, much less to become one mountain by personation, or acting a person.

Of like nature is it where, to do me a kindness,

he will state my cube more to my purpose; (page 5) meaning the contrary. But how? In a marble cube may be two accidents, hardness and coldness. There may be so. But what then? Then, he says, here are three cubes more for me. He would have it thought, I suppose, that I had before discoursed of three cubes, whereas I spoke but of one cube, under three dimensions; and he will now help me to another three. But he is out again. For the cold cube, the hard cube, and the marble cube are but one cube, not three cubes. It is the same cube that is cold, and hard, and marble. It would have been much the same, if, instead of a cube, he had taken a marble bowl or ball, and then told me it is cold, and hard, and round. True. And yet it is but one bowl, not three bowls; one ball, not three balls. And what is there in all this of inconsistent absurdity? It seems to me very consistent, not absurd, and it suits my notion very well.

But, says he, (page 5) not to suppose the simile altogether impertinent, (very well!) yet it is in our case. Why in our case? For our debate, he says, is not whether there may not be three persons in God. Yes: that is our debate, and the true state of the question. All his other excursions are beside the question.

But the simile, though not impertinent, is yet, he says, most absurd, because not adequate; and it is a general rule with him, (page 6) where he brings a simile to have it adequate, that it may really prove

the matter designed. Now that my similes are not adequate, so as to prove all that is to be said of God, or the blessed Trinity, I had told him at first, and more than once, and that they were not intended so to be; and I tell him now, that I did purposely make choice of such as were a great way off, that it might not seem as if I would have them thought to be adequate as to all that is to be said of the Trinity. And as to the rule he goes by, perhaps it may be his method, where much is to be proved, to prove it all at once, and take all arguments to be absurd which do not at once prove all. But we who are conversant in cubes and demonstrations, as he phraseth it, think fit sometimes to use another method; and, where much is to be proved, to proceed by steps. We first propose one thing, and prove that; then another, and prove that, and so on: and if what be brought to prove the first step do prove what it is brought to prove, we do not say the argument is absurd, because it doth not prove all at once, but that it is a good argument so far; and, I think, if he will here give me leave to use a simile which is not adequate, it is a method used by other men as well as mathematicians; for, if a man be to mount a pair of stairs, we do not say the first step is absurd, because that alone doth not bring him to the top; or, if to go a journey, that the first step is absurd, because it doth not bring him to his journey's end; but the first step brings him so far, and the second somewhat farther;

and so on, till, step by step, he comes to the top, or to his journey's end. Now, there being divers points concerned in the doctrine of the Trinity, I stated my question not so as to prove all at once, but singled out this one point, that it is not inconsistent with reason; or, to use his own words, it is agreeable to the common notions of human reasoning, that what in one consideration are three, may in another consideration be one; and that there may be three somewhats which are one God. But, whether indeed there be so, is another step; and whether these somewhats may fitly be called persons, is yet another. Now, if I have made good my first step, my argument or simile is not only not altogether impertinent, but neither is it most absurd, yea not absurd at all, because it proves what it was brought to prove; and that so it doth himself allow, and tells us plainly, (page 3) he cannot say, there is a contradiction in holding that there may be three persons in God. *ἴσπερ εἶδει δέξαι.*

But, I find, he would fain be upon another point, (page 4) and draw me to it. A point not to be argued upon the topic of reason only; for reason alone can go no further than to prove it possible, or not inconsistent; but to be argued from Scripture, and divine revelations, whether indeed there are three somewhats, which we call persons, that are but one God.

But this, I have told him already, is beside the

question which I undertook; and in this it is he that is the aggressor, not I; and I only upon the defence. Yet, because he is so desirous of it, I am content to go somewhat out of my way to wait on him, and to hear what he hath to say, why we should think that is not, which he confesseth may be without any contradiction to natural reason. And I shall take notice as I go along, what it is wherein we agree, as well as wherein we differ, that so we may not quarrel about what is agreed between us.

He begins with the first commandment, (pages 1, 2, 3, 4) and seems mightily to dread the guilt of idolatry in admitting more Gods than one: our case is, we are afraid of idolatry, (page 9) contrary to this commandment, of having no other God. And so I would have him be; but we shall find this fear will be over with him by and by. What, says he, was that commandment made for? What! to prevent polytheism. Why, how is that to be done? By denying many gods. If it be not made to deny personal gods, it is made to no purpose. And soon after, with some indignation, What! is the divinity of Christ implied in the New Testament? It is denied in the first commandment. And (page 9) pray what Scripture shall we regard in competition with this commandment, written by the finger of God, and one of the only precepts he himself immediately delivered?

Now I am so far from disliking his zeal for the

first commandment, that I do perfectly agree with what I find in that commandment; “I am the Lord thy God, (the Lord God of Israel) thou shalt have no other God but me;” and this I shall desire him to remember by and by. He may add that of Deut. vi. 7, (for in this I agree also) “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God (the Lord God of Israel) is one Lord;” and that of Matt. iv. 10, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, (the Lord God of Israel) and him only shalt thou serve;” and that of 1 Cor. viii. 6, “To us there is but one God,” and as many more places, as he pleases, to that purpose; and from all these I do agree that we are to have but one God and no more, not two Gods; no other God than the Lord God of Israel: that we are to worship him alone, and none else; not Satan, not the god of Ekron, not any god, or man, or angel who is not the Lord God of Israel: for all this I grant to be there fully taught; and I am willing to put as great weight upon this solemn set precept of the first commandment as he doth, and perhaps more. He would have us shew, if we can, (page 9) where this commandment is abrogated. I say, no where. It was never abrogated, never repealed; it remains, I grant, still in its full force, and, therefore, we own no other God, but the Lord God of Israel; and this Lord God of Israel we say is one Lord, one God, and no more Gods than one. We say indeed, there is a wise God, a powerful God, an almighty God, an eternal God, a just

God, a merciful God, God the Creator, God the Redeemer, God the Sanctifier; a God who in the beginning created the heaven and the earth, a God who in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of his hands; a God of Abraham, a God of Isaac, a God of Jacob; a God who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, a God who brought them out of the north country; a God who is our mighty Redeemer; a God who is a Saviour of all that trust in him; a God who doth create in us a clean heart, and doth renew a right spirit within us; a God who gives us a heart of flesh, a God who gives us a new heart, who putteth his fear in our hearts, who writes his law in our inward parts, a God who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins; a God who hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a mighty salvation for us. But we say, the Lord God of Israel is all this; and, in being all this, he is but one God; and that there is no other God but one; and we grant, that whoever owns any other God as a true God, or worships a false God, breaks this commandment. I do not know what he would have us grant more upon this commandment. I wish he do not think we have granted too much.

He says, (page 3) we vitiate this commandment by bringing in new persons, by adding several persons to our one God. No: we add no persons to our God. We say that God the Creator, God

the Redeemer, God the Sanctifier, or, in other words, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *are* this one God, not added to him: nor are they new persons added to God; but are God, and ever were so.

He would have us think, (page 17) that the Father only, and not the Son, or Holy Ghost, is the only true God, because of John xvii. 3: the words are these, "This is life eternal, to know thee (not only thee) the only true God, (to be that God, beside which there is no other true God) and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." And we say the same that is here said. The Father is the only true God, the Lord God of Israel, beside whom there is no other true God; the Son is also not another God, as the Arians say, and this answerer, (page 17) but the same only true God, the Lord God of Israel, and he is expressly so called, Luke i. 16, 17; and the Holy Ghost likewise, for these three are one, 1 John v. 7; and the words, without any force put upon them, may be thus read, to know thee, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ, to be the only true God. For the word only is not a restrictive to thee, but to the true God; and this is not only a new quirk or criticism, which is the only answer he gives to this defence, but is the true sense of the place. For the same writer doth, in another place, say the very same thing of God the Son, 1 John v. 20, "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the

true God, and eternal life." Now if Scripture must interpret Scripture, as he tells us, (page 16) certainly St. John in his epistle, 1 John v. 20, understood what himself said in his gospel, John xvii. 3; and that what he said of the Father's being the only true God was not exclusive of the Son, to whom himself gives the same title, "This is the true God, and this is eternal life." And this, I think, is a full answer to what he would urge from this place, or from what he joins with it, 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6, "To us there is but one God," which is no more express to his purpose than this is; nor doth he pretend that it is, but puts them both together, (page 17).

There is one place more which comes under consideration, which, because he finds it pinch, he would fain shake off, (page 17). It is that of John i. 1, 2, 10, 14, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The world was made by him; all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made which was made; and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us." The former answerer would fain shuffle off this place (in his page 9) upon one of these three points, for otherwise he grants it is for our purpose; either that by the Word is not meant Christ; or by God not the true God; or else that St. John writes nonsense. Now the last of the three, I suppose, our new answerer will not say, because he pretends a great

reverence for Scriptures. The first he quits, and doth admit, according to the Arian sense, which he looks upon as more defensible than that of the Socinians, that by the Word is here meant the person of Christ, who was afterward incarnate of the virgin Mary, and that he was pre-existent to his Incarnation; as by whom the world was made, at least as by an instrument; and that he was with God (the true God) at least in the beginning of the world, if not sooner, and that he was God.

All the doubt is, whether these two Gods, for so he calls them, to wit, the Father and the Word, be one, (page 17).

Now, if he be God, he must be either a true God or a false God. That he is a false God, methinks, they should not say; and, if he be a true God, he must be the same God with the Father, who is the *only* true God, John xvii. 3.

That he is to be worshipped with religious worship, both the Arians and the Socinians do allow. And if he be God, as the Arians and this answerer do affirm, this worship must be divine worship, and he must be then the Lord God of Israel; or else they break that precept, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, (the Lord God of Israel) and him *only* shalt thou serve," Matt. iv. 10.

If he be the Lord God of Israel, but not the same Lord God of Israel, how doth this agree with that, Deut. vi. 4, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord?" And if he be another God,

whether true or false, then do they break the great and first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other God but me;" no other God, true or false, great or little, equal or unequal, but the Lord God of Israel. On which commandment this answerer doth, deservedly, lay so great a stress, as we heard before. "What was it made for, if not to prevent polytheism? How shall it be done, but by denying many gods? If not to deny personal gods, it is made to no purpose. How is it consistent with that first commandment, that solemn and set precept of the first commandment, that was delivered by God himself, written by the finger of God, and never abrogated, to bring in new persons, to add persons (one or more) to this only God, though particularly prohibited, and not break it? What! is the divinity of Christ implied in the New Testament? It is denied in the first commandment, if he be not the same God who is there meant. And pray what Scripture shall we regard in competition with this commandment?" With more to the same purpose.

Whether he will make use of the popish distinction of *latria* and *doulia*,* for his two Gods, not co-equal, I cannot tell; but the commandment says expressly, "Thou shalt have *no other* God but me," equal or unequal.

Nor doth this error end here, (as he proceeds)

* NOTE O.

for our adversaries are not always so lucky as to see consequences. For should some revelation, such as, he says, is not impossible, deify more men than ever the heathen did, here is no fence left; (here is room enough to thrust in his Jupiter, Bacchus, Venus, &c. of which he tells us, page 8) and it is in vain, he tells us, in such a case, to pretend that the number would be of offence to us; for if we consider aright, there is no more reason for one number than another; and he thinks that if there be more than one, it is more honourable they should be infinites; because all between one and infinite is imperfect; with much more of like nature. Of all which I know not what better to think than that he had forgot all this, when afterwards (at page 17) he will have these two Gods, as he calls them, to wit, the Father and the Word, not to be one, but two and separate.

Nor will it excuse the matter to say, that this other God is not co-equal with the Father; for, at this rate, the polytheism, or many gods of the heathen, would be excused, as out of the reach of this commandment; for they did not make all their gods co-equal to their great Jupiter, nor perhaps any of them equal to our God: but Jupiter was their god paramount, and the rest were either middling gods or lesser gods; but yet this did not excuse them from polytheism and idolatry within the reach of the first commandment. For that commandment, that unrepealed law, forbids all

other Gods, whether equal or unequal, the leeks and onions in Egypt, which are said to have been there worshipped, as well as the calves at Dan and Bethel. Nor is it less idolatry, nor less within the reach of this commandment, to worship the god of Ekron, because not co-equal to the God of Israel.

We, therefore, choose to say, that Christ is indeed God, as he is expressly called, John i. 1, "The Word was with God, and the Word was God;" and Heb. i. 8, "Thy throne, O God, endureth for ever;" and in many other places; and not only a man, extraordinarily assisted by God, as this answerer grants also, (at page 14). That "he was in the beginning, and in the beginning was with God," John i. 1, 2, and, therefore, was pre-existent before his Incarnation, and did not then begin to be; that "he was in the beginning, and all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made; that the world was made by him," John i. 3, 10, and is, therefore, the same God who "in the beginning created the heaven and the earth," Gen. i. 1; that of him it is said, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thy hands," Heb. i. 8, 10, cited out of Psalm cii. 25, and is, therefore, the same God to whom that long prayer, Psalm cii, was made, and of whom so many great things are there said, and which cannot belong to any but the

Supreme God; and no doubt but, when this was there said by the psalmist, he meant it of that God who “in the beginning created the heaven and the earth,” Gen. i. 1. That he is *ὁ ὦν ἐπὶ πάντων*, the Being above all things, (or, the Supreme Being) God blessed for ever, (or, the ever blessed God) Rom. ix. 5, which are titles too high for any lower than the Supreme God; that what is said of God indefinitely, as contradistinguished from Christ in particular, Rev. i. 4, *ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος, καὶ ὁ ἦν, καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, “From him which is, and which was, and which is to come, (or, which shall be) and from Jesus Christ,” &c., is particularly applied to Jesus Christ as his character, v. 8, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, he that liveth, and was dead, and liveth for evermore, v. 16, which is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty.” That he is the true God, 1 John v. 20, and, therefore, the same God with the Father, who is the only true God, John xvii. 3, and no other true God but what he is. That “he and the Father are one,” John x. 30. That “the Father, and the Word, and the Spirit, these three are one,” 1 John v. 7; and Christ, not another God, but the same God, “manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory,” 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Now I know not well what could be said more,

at least, what more need be said, to make the point clear; or what character he can reasonably desire more by which to describe the almighty Supreme God, and the same God with the Father. He is God, the true God, the only true God; for there can be but one God that is the only true God; one with the Father; one with the Father and Holy Ghost; the eternal God, who is, and was, and shall be, who, when the heavens and the earth shall wax old as a garment, he is the same and his years shall not fail; the Almighty, the mighty God, the eternal Father; the God who in the beginning made the world, who made all things, and without whom not any thing was made that was made; who in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of his hands; who is the Son of God, the begotten of the Father, the only begotten of the Father, and, therefore, of the same nature with the Father, however not the same person, or not under that consideration. Nor can he say, this is impossible, a contradiction, or inconsistent with reason, and that, therefore, though the words be clear and plain, yet we must seek out some other sense to be forced upon them; for this point is already gained, and he doth confess it, (page 3) that there is no contradiction in holding that there may be three persons in God; and, if there be no contradiction in it, why should we be afraid to say what in Scripture is said so plainly?

or, why should we set up two Gods where one will serve, and when the Scripture says there is but one?

He will say, perhaps, God made the world by Christ. And we say so too. But not as by a tool or instrument, as he would have it, (page 17) but rather as by his power and wisdom. But the power and wisdom of God are not things diverse from God himself, but are himself; much less are they different gods from God himself. And, even amongst us, the power and wisdom of a man are not things distinct from the man, in that sense wherein the words thing and mode are contradistinguished; much less are they distinct men from the man whose power and wisdom they are. The man and his wisdom, the man and his power, are not distinguished *ut res et res*, as the schools speak, but *ut res et modus*. And power and wisdom, in the same man, *ut modus et modus*. For though a man may subsist without wisdom, (but God cannot) yet wisdom cannot subsist without somewhat that is wise, nor this man's wisdom without the man; and, therefore, this wisdom, according to the school distinction, must be *modus*, and not *res*. And the like of power. So that if we say, that Christ is the power of God, or the wisdom of God, as he is called, 1 Cor. i. 24, and that God by his power and wisdom, made the world, it doth not follow that this power, or wisdom of God is another god

from God himself; but God and his wisdom, or God and his power, are God himself. Consonant to this it is, where it is said, Col. ii. 3, "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." And, perhaps, it is this Divine wisdom who tells us, Prov. viii. 22, 23, 27, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways: I was from everlasting, from the beginning: when he prepared the heavens I was there;" and much more to the same purpose. So the Holy Ghost is called the power of God, Luke i. 35, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." Now shall we say, because God is wise in heart, and mighty in strength, Job ix. 4, or because by his wisdom and power he made the world, therefore his wisdom and his power are distinct gods from himself? Or if we should say, that God, as the fountain of being, may be called the Father; and the same God, as the fountain of wisdom, be called the Son; and, as the fountain of power, be called the Holy Ghost; there is nothing of this that is inconsistent with reason, but very agreeable with the common notions of human reasoning; and yet all these, however under divers considerations, are but one God. But here I must caution again, for I find people are willing to mistake, or misapply what I say, that I do not set down this as the adequate distinction between the three persons, for this I do not pretend thoroughly

to understand;* but only that it is not inconsistent with reason that it may be so, and that there is no necessity, upon this account, to set up another God.

Or we may say, much to the same purpose, that God, by his Word and Spirit, made the world; and yet that his Word and his Spirit are not, therefore, distinct Gods from himself. And we have them all mentioned in the story of the creation. “God created the heaven and the earth,” Gen. i. 1; “The *spirit* of God moved upon the face of the waters,” v. 2; and “God *said*, (or spake the word) let there be light,” &c., v. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24 and v. 26, “Let *us* make man;” and Psalm xxxiii. 6, 9, “By the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the *spirit*, or *breath* of his mouth: he *spake* and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast;” and, to the like purpose, Psalm cxlviii. 5, Job xxvi. 13: yet are they not three Gods, but rather three somewhats, which are but one God.

I have insisted the longer on this, because I do not know but that, through the grace of God, such a discourse as this may have a like effect on him, or some of his party, as that of Wittichius had on his friend Sandius. And I have argued it calmly. I have used no scurrilous language, nor given any reproachful terms. I do not oppress

* NOTE P.

him with the authority of fathers, or councils, but with Scripture only, and plain reason; and it seems to me so clear, that if they cannot see it, it is from some other reason than from want of clearness.

As to what I have said for explication of the Athanasian Creed, though I cannot expect he should approve of that creed while he retains his opinion, I do not find that he takes any great exceptions to what I say of it.

He doth not like the words Trinity in Unity, as foreign and unscriptural, (page 19). He may, if that will please him better, put it into plainer English, and call it three in one, and then the words are scriptural, "These three are one."

The possibility of God's being incarnate he doth not deny; only he likes the Arian incarnation better than ours.

He seems well pleased, (pages 19, 20) that I do not positively affirm this creed to be written by Athanasius; (it is the same thing to me whether it were written by him or some other, so long as I find it agreeable to Scripture) that I do not anathematize the Greek church; (wherein yet I would not be thought to encourage dangerous errors, for the errors are equally dangerous and equally fundamental, whether I do or do not anathematize them) that I do not damn all children, fools, madmen, and all before Christ, as, he tells us, some rigid Trinitarians, I know not who, have done too often;

that I own the word person to be but metaphorical, which (at page 7) he did not like, which I will not disoblige him by unsaying.

Where it is that I have blamed the fathers I do not remember; for I think the fathers do concur in this, that there is a distinction between the three which we call persons, greater than that between the Divine attributes; but not such as to make them three Gods, and that, by calling them persons, they mean no more; and I say the same.

I shall conclude with this observation upon the whole. He was at the beginning of his discourse a direct Socinian, dreading the guilt of idolatry in having more Gods than one, as contrary to the first commandment, and therein I agree with him; but denied the divinity of Christ, as the Socinians do: and thus he continues till toward the end of page 10; but then begins, silently, to tack about, and after a while, doth with as much earnestness affirm the divinity of Christ, as he had before denied it—that Christ was God from the beginning, before the world was; that he was afterward incarnate and became man; and, as God and man, redeemed us, &c. And here he is orthodox again, but then tells us that this God is not the same God, or co-equal with the Father, but another God; and at length tells us plainly that there are, at least, two Gods, to wit, the Father and the Word; for now the fear of having more Gods than one is over with him, and is by this time a perfect Arian.

And he, who from a Socinian is thus turned Arian, may at the next turn, for aught I know, turn Orthodox.

In order to which, I would advise him to keep to the sound part of his first opinion while he was a Socinian, namely, that we ought to acknowledge and worship but one God; and the sound part of his second opinion when he was turned Arian, namely, that Christ (the Word) was God from the beginning, before the world was; that he was afterward incarnate, and so became God and man; that, as such, he suffered, died, and wrought out our redemption; that the merits of his sufferings are founded on his Godhead, which, otherwise, would not have been meritorious if he were only a man, however extraordinarily assisted by God: and when he hath so joined these two together, as to make them consistent, he will be therein orthodox; and if to these two he add a third, which he owns also, namely, that there is no contradiction in holding there may be three persons in God, he will then be able to answer all the cavils which either the Arian or the Socinian shall bring against it.

Yours,

JOHN WALLIS.

Jan. 13, 1697.

A FIFTH LETTER

CONCERNING

THE SACRED TRINITY,

IN ANSWER TO WHAT IS INTITLED

THE ARIAN'S VINDICATION OF HIMSELF AGAINST DR. WALLIS'S FOURTH
LETTER ON THE TRINITY.

BY JOHN WALLIS, D.D.

[PUBLISHED IN 1691.]

LETTER V.

CONCERNING THE SACRED TRINITY.

SIR,

I HAVE met with an answer to my fourth letter. It is not long, and my reply shall be but short. There is very little in it concerning the merits of the cause, save that he resolves to hold the conclusion; and as to personal reflections, or disdainful expressions, I do not think fit to trouble the reader with a long reply; for those, I think, do not hurt me so much as him that useth them.

He is not pleased (page 1) that I said I had argued calmly, without scurrilous language or reproachful terms; and I appeal to the reader whether it be not so. Nor doth he deny it. And if his language were so too, he needed not to have made the reader an apology to excuse his expressions, that he might avoid the character of a common railer, (page 1).

But, he says, abating the little subtilties and artifices, incomparably witty, there is not the least

grain of weight in my letter. Of this the reader is to be judge, both as to the weight and as to the wit.

He says, it seems a Socinian wrote against me. True: and it seems he knew it, for he cites him. And that himself wrote as an Arian. I think he should rather have said, he wrote first as a Socinian, in his first ten pages, and then as an Arian, in the other ten. For I do not find any thing till toward the end of his tenth page whereby I could judge him other than a direct Socinian; and I think it will so appear to any other reader.

He takes to himself the name of Unitarian, by which I do not find the Arians were wont to be called. But it is a new name which the Socinians have taken up to distinguish themselves both from us and from the Arians; for the Arians are rather Pluritarians, as holding more Gods than one. And the book to which himself refers us, (page 4) is intituled, "The History of the Unitarians, otherwise called Socinians," and (in page 11) where he first mentions the Arians, he doth introduce it with a preface, minding me that I write against Arians as well as Socinians; as having, till then, spoke for the Socinians only, not for the Arians, and then first beginning to speak for the Arians; and even in his tenth page, toward the beginning of it, what had been said of the Socinians by name, and of Socinus in particular, he takes to himself as if one of that party. He seems (saith he of me) to

insinuate an aspersion on us that we believe not angels.

He tells us now, (page 3) he doth believe them; and I will suppose also that he doth believe the soul's immortality. But when he there says that I bring a world of arguments to prove the immortality of the soul, he mistakes again; for those arguments were brought against Socinus, not to prove the soul's immortality, but that the soul, in its separate condition, was capable of pain or pleasure, which Socinus denied.

For requital to this, he tells me he had a good mind to prove the existence of a Deity, for that he had heard of some men of the profession of the Church of England that have almost been Atheists at the heart. And truly if he should do so, I should not think it much amiss; for I have heard the same suspected of some Socinians.

He now tells me, (page 2) he never was a Socinian in his life. Of what he had been in the former part of his life I had said nothing, for I knew no more what it was, than who he is, but (page 131) of what he was in the beginning of his discourse, and it is plain he there writes like a direct Socinian, as was shewed but now, though as an Arian some time after.

He tells me, (page 2) that he is neither the Socinian, nor his friend, who assisted in his first book. Neither did I say that he is; but that he might be for aught I knew. But whether he be or

not, it is the same thing to me; for I am yet to fight in the dark with I know not whom.

He says, he is not concerned to defend Socinus, or any man who hath dropt imprudent words. Nor did I require it of him. And whether he were or were not the same man who wrote before; yet, since here he acts another person, I left it free for him (pages 95, 96) to decline, if he pleased, what was said before; to grant what was there denied, or deny what was there granted.

But then, he thinks, (page 1) I should not charge him with writing contradictions, because such things may possibly be found in the other's answer. Nor do I. This is only a piece of his wonted artifice of misreciting me. I tell him, indeed, it is hard to please them both, when they do not agree amongst themselves, and I did observe, and argue from it, what he grants, though the other had denied it. But I never charge him with what the other had said. And, if he look it over again, he will find that I did not confront him, to shew thence a contradiction, with what the other had said; but did confront what himself had said in his ten first pages with what he says in the other ten; and it is manifest that, in the first ten, he acts the Socinian, and in the latter ten, the Arian; but in whether of the twain he acts his own part it was not easy to determine, till he now tells us he is an Arian.

He had argued, (pages 8, 14) that the Trinity

are persons, as really, and as properly, and fully personally distinct as three angels, and each person, both Son and Holy Ghost by name, complete and entire in himself, with as complete personal distinction as that in men and angels. From whence, when I inferred his owning the personality of the Holy Ghost, he fearing, it seems, he had overshot himself, now tells us (page 4) just as much as becomes an Arian. But if he own him to be as much a person as a man, or angel is a person, it is as much, or perhaps more, than we need contend for in this point.

I had charged him also with misreciting me in many other things: as when I am introduced, very often, as talking of two Gods, three Gods, personal Gods, of adding several persons to our one God, and the like; according as here also he says (page 7) that I say, you yourself own two Gods, and why may not I then three, when he knows very well this is not my language; nor is any thing of all this said by me. To this he now says, (page 5) it is true enough he doth so; but that he doth it by inference. But he should then speak it as his inference, not cite it as my words.

I might have taken notice, amongst a great many gross mistakes, that where I had mentioned the lords and commons of England declaring the Prince of Orange to be King of England, France, and Ireland, he misrecites it, (page 6) King of England, Scotland, and France; as if the parlia-

ment of England had taken upon them to dispose of the kingdom of Scotland, and not that of Ireland. But this, and a many more, I passed over without reflecting on it; because, in his language, he is so very negligent and careless, and otherwise obnoxious, that it were endless to reflect on all.

But I was obliged to take notice, because it quite perverts my argument, of what he says (page 4) that I say, three sides make one cube, &c., which is neither true, nor are they my words. I argued not from three sides, but from the three dimensions of a cube. This he calls trifling, and would persuade us that side and dimension differ no more than muting and — his other word, which is fitter for his mouth than mine. But though he, perhaps, know no difference between them, yet he should not have cited it as my words, and say that I say so, when I did not: for I ought to know better, and that a cube hath six sides, though but three dimensions. Nor did I argue from the six sides, but from the three dimensions. Yet I can forgive him this, rather than when he doth it wilfully, though it misrecite my argument; because I believe it to be out of pure ignorance, not of malice.

He doth not like (page 6) either this or any other similes, and would have me no more to insist upon them; but he must excuse me from taking his advice herein, unless he understood it better than, by what was now said, he seems to do; because, if

he be not mistaken, as I think he is, they are very far from my purpose. That is, he thinks they do not prove the Trinity. True: these, alone, do not prove it, nor was it intended they should; but they prove what they were brought to prove, that it is not a contradiction, or inconsistent with reason, that there may be three somewhats, which we call persons, that are but one God. And thus much he had before granted, and doth now again confirm it, (pages 3, 4). It is true indeed, he says, I cannot say that there is a contradiction in holding that there may be three persons in God; for, saith he, “there be two sorts of contradictions, the one express, the other implied. I cannot say there is a contradiction in holding it; because I have not the definition of the word God so exact as to raise an implied contradiction; and, for an express contradiction, I do not pretend to it.” If, therefore, there be no contradiction, either express or implied, it is what I was to prove.

But, saith he, the dispute shall not end here. He will be allowed the privilege (and nobody doth deny it him) to fetch in the first comment to define the word God. With all my heart. I was never against it; for what he says, more than once, (pages 3, 4) that I meanly cry, he flies to Scripture, is but another piece of his wonted art of misreciting; there is nothing to that purpose in any thing of mine. I do sometime blame him for changing the state of the question; as, when he

would have me prove by reason that it is so, I tell him that is not the question, nor is that to be proved by reason. The question is, whether there is any thing in reason why it cannot be so. Now, let him keep to the question; and then, if he think he can prove, from Scripture, that it is inconsistent with reason for three somewhats to be one God; or that it is a contradiction for God the Creator, and God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier, to be the same God; or that it is impossible for the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, to be one and the same God, let him try his skill. And let him make what use he can of the first commandment to define the word God, so as to prove this a contradiction. But, when he had claimed this privilege, (and nobody doth deny it) he makes no use of it for any such definition.

The truth is, I had already granted him, from that commandment, (pages 116, 117, 118, 121, 122) more than he was willing I should grant: that we are to have *no other God*, great or little, equal or unequal, but the Lord God of Israel.

Yes, says he, there is one Supreme God, another creature God; but that this is not to have two personal Gods. How so? If these be two Gods, and each of them a person, complete and entire of himself, as really, and properly, and fully, and personally distinct, as a man or angel, (as he had before told us at pages 8, 14) they must needs be

two personal Gods. But we, according to the first commandment, acknowledge but one God; and those three somewhats, whom, in a metaphorical sense, we call persons, not so to be distinct as to become three Gods.

He hopes, however, to avoid the first commandment by saying that, though they be two Gods, they are not two Gods co-equal, (page 5) and that they worship the Son, not with supreme worship, with mediation, not adoration, (page 6). What he means by his two worships of mediation and adoration, I do not well understand, unless they be new names for *doulia* and *latria*. Nor do I remember that I have before heard of a worship of mediation. That Christ is our mediator I know; but did not know that he is our worshipper.

And what doth he think of the Israelites, when they worshipped the golden calf? Surely they did not think this calf to be co-equal with the Supreme God: nor did they think it to be (*Deus natus*) a god by nature; but (*Deus factus*) a made god, for themselves had made it just before. Yet I never knew that this did excuse them from idolatry.

He doth not own Christ to be the true God, (for such there is but one, the only true God) nor yet a false God, but a mean between both, (page 6). Now it is true the heathen had (*Deos medioxumos*) their middling gods; but I never knew that we could worship such without idolatry. “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, (the Supreme God)

and him *only* shalt thou serve," was our Saviour's doctrine, Matt. iv. 10; and St. John expressly calls him the true God, 1 John viii. 20, (not a middling God, between true and false) and, therefore, the same God with the Father, the only true God.

To that character of Christ, Rev. i. 8, 11, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, saith the Lord, which *is*, and *was*, and is *to come*, the Almighty," he says this style is given him in opposition to God's simpler one, *I am*. But he should have observed that the same title is, at v. 4, given to God, in contradistinction to Christ, ἀπὸ τῆς ὁ ὄν, καὶ ὁ ἦν, καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος,—καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰησοῦς Χριστοῦ, &c.; and if it were there a character of the Supreme God, it is so here: and if he think the simpler term ὁ ὄν, *I am*, to be more expressive of the Supreme God, we have that also emphatically given to Christ, Rom. ix. 5, ὁ ὄν ἐπὶ πάντων, he which *is*, or the Being over all, the Supreme Being.

To what further I had brought (pages 124, 125, 126) to prove him to be the Supreme God, the same God with the Father, not a middling or titular God, he makes no reply; which, therefore, stands as it was, nor need I repeat it, because it may be read there; and it is so full and clear, that I need add no more to it.

To what I had said of John xvii. 3, "To know thee (not thee only, or only thee) the only true God," he saith he hath answered already. And I

have already replied, nor need I repeat it. Their argument from thence is just in this form: the God of Abraham is the only true God; therefore, not the God of Isaac, or the God of Jacob. Yes, say I, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob is the same God, but under another consideration. So here, God the Creator (or God the Father) is the only true God; therefore, not God the Redeemer, nor God the Sanctifier. Yes; God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier is the same God, the only true God. In like manner, Jer. xvi. 14, 15, and again, Jer. xxiii. 7, 8, "It shall no more be said, the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the north country." Now, saith the first commandment, "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; thou shalt have no other God but me;" therefore, not the God which brought them out of the north country. Yes, say I, even this God also, which is not another God, but the same God; though considered as the author of another benefit.

There be many other things, both in his first and second paper, (his Answer and his Vindication) which lie very open to be reflected on, if it were worth the while: but I think I have said enough already; and he thinks too much, that I have been too stiff, too hard with him, (page 8) which things

I shall therefore omit, to save myself and the reader the labour.

But three things he calls me to account for omitting—his reproof of my false idea of the personality of God, the impossibility and blasphemy of his Incarnation, and of the death of God, (page 8). Now when I had proved the things to be true, I thought that had been a sufficient answer to his calling them false, impossible, and blasphemous: for they are never the more so for his calling them so. And I know not what further answer he should expect, unless he would have me say it is foul-mouthed blasphemy in him to call it blasphemy. But if I should answer him all along at this rate, according as his language deserves, we should, instead of disputing, fall to right down railing, which is the character he was afraid of, (page 1).

However, to gratify him once more, that by the Word, John i, is meant Christ, himself owns; and that “this Word was God from the beginning;” that “he made the world, and all things;” and that “without him was not any thing made which was made,” and, therefore, say I, himself was not made, unless our Arian would have us think he made himself; that this God is the Supreme God we have proved at large; (if he deny it to be proved, we must leave it to the reader to judge of the arguments) and that “this Word was made

flesh." I hope I need not tell him that to be made flesh, and to be incarnate, is all one, for every one understands this who knows that *caro carnis* is Latin for flesh: therefore this is no blasphemy.

Again, that God in Christ suffered and died, and that we are redeemed by the blood of God, he had before told us, (pages 13, 14). That this is the true God we have proved at large, as was but now said; therefore the death of God (that is, of him that was God as well as man) is no blasphemy.

Yet again, I do not take his reproof, as he calls it, to be a proof that my idea of personality is false, and, therefore, I did not think it deserved an answer, having proved the thing before. Yet I thought I had answered it, as much as it need to be answered, when (at my page 130) I told him, nor doth he deny it, that he seemed well pleased (at his page 20) that I owned the word person to be but metaphorical, though, (at his page 7) which is the reproof he means, he did not like it: for till after page 7 he acted the Socinian, and did not come to act the Arian till afterward, and then he seemed (at page 20) to like it well enough.

I shall yet add somewhat more upon that point, which if it may not satisfy him, (who seems to intimate (page 8) that he will not be satisfied) may give some further satisfaction to the reader.

The word person (*persona*) is originally a Latin

word, and doth not properly signify a man, so as that another person must needs imply another man, for then the word *homo* would have served, and they needed not have taken in the word *persona*; but rather one so circumstantiated. And the same man, if considered in other circumstances, considerably different, is reputed another person. And that this is the true notion of the word person appears by those noted phrases, *personam induere*, *personam deponere*, *personam agere*, *personam sustinere*, *sustineo unus tres personas*, and many the like in approved Latin authors. Thus the same man may at once sustain the person of a king and of a father, if he be invested both with regal and paternal authority. Now because the king and the father are, for the most part, not only different persons, but different men also, and the like in other cases; hence it comes to pass that another person is sometimes supposed to imply another man; but not always, nor is that the proper sense of the word. It is Englished, in our dictionaries, by the state, quality, or condition whereby one man differs from another: and so, as the condition alters, the person alters, though the man be the same. Our schoolmen of later ages do sometimes apply the word *persona* to angels as well as men; but even that is but metaphorical; nor do I find that it ever was so used in approved Latin authors, either for angels, genii, or their heathen gods, but for the different state or condition of men only.

Now when the same man doth thus sustain two persons, as that of a king and that of a father, he may, as to one thing, act as a king, by his regal authority; as to another thing as a father, by his paternal authority. And these authorities may be in subordination one to the other, though the man be the same; and what is done in either capacity, may indifferently be said to be done by the man, or by the king; as that David, or the king, pardoned Absalom, and in like manner by the man, or by the father.

This being the true and proper notion of the word person, we are next to consider what it is to signify in the present case. Where we are to consider that the word person is not applied in Scripture to these three so called: it is not there said, these three persons are one, but only these three are one. It is but the church's usage that gives to these three somewhats the name of persons.

And, therefore, our Arian was much mistaken when he tells us, (page 20) that the word person is the hinge of the controversy. The hinge of the controversy is that notion concerning these three somewhats, which the fathers, who first used it, did intend to design by the name person: so that we are not from the word person to determine what was that notion, but from that notion which they would express, to determine in what sense the word person is here used. And if the word person do

not well fit that sense, all that can be thence inferred is no more but that they have made use of an unfit name to express their notion. It is no more but as if a cruel pope take the name of Clement, or a wicked one the name of Pius; or if a man be named Wilson whose father's name was Thomas. And in all such cases, *certitudo rei tollit errorem nominis*. And if we know who is the man designed by such a name, it is a ridiculous exception to say this is not the man, because that name doth not well agree with his nature. It is just as if one should argue there never was such a man as whom they called Pope Pius, because the man whom they so called was not a pious man.

Now two of these three being represented in Scripture as Father and Son, and this Father said to beget the Son, and all these in a sense metaphorical, (not in such sense as those words do properly signify amongst men) they thought it not unfit, in continuation of the same metaphor, to call them persons. Because as the word person doth properly agree to the relations of Father and Son in a proper sense, so doth the word person in a metaphorical sense to the Father and Son so taken metaphorically, and the word beget by a like metaphor.

When, therefore, it is certain that the notion which the ancient fathers had concerning these three, which in a metaphorical sense they called person, was this, that there is a distinction between

them, greater than that of the Divine attributes, but not so great as to make them three Gods; it is manifest that they took the metaphor, not from that abusive sense of the word person, when, amongst us, it is put for man, but from that proper sense of the word *persona*, wherein it signifies the state, condition, office, or relation of a man, as variously circumstantiated with reference to others, whereof the same man may sustain more than one. As when David was the son of Jesse, the father of Solomon, and the King of Israel. So if we say of any, that he is a person of honour, a person of worth, and a person of interest, that same man may be all this without becoming three men.

Now this our Arian may call, if he please, a quirk, a criticism, an undermining the very idea of the word person, (as he did in his pages 7, 15, 17) or may neglect it, if he please; but the sober reader, who understands it better, will have better thoughts of it.

And, therefore, I shall not take his advice, (pages 7, 8) to say that God is the name of an office, that so he might know how to attack me, as he says, which, while I talk so warily, he knows not how to do. I say, God is the name of the nature; but if he will have Christ to be the name of an office, (the mediatory office) and the Comforter, or even the Creator, the Redeemer, the Sanctifier, to be names of work, function, or office, it will not be much amiss.

Now, when I had said this doctrine of ours is as old at least as the New Testament, because I can prove it from thence, he will have it (page 5) no older than the disputes of Alexander and Athanasius, which the primitive church knew nothing of. But he bars quotations all along: and, therefore, I must not prove it to be known to the church before that time, but leave it to the judgment of readers versed in church history. Whose word must pass, in this case, his or mine?

To his question, (page 6) did the Jews ever hear of it before Christianity? I think they had some intimations of it, as they had of the resurrection; but not so clearly (either of them) as to be generally understood of all, nor so fully as in the New Testament: and I think it was from those notices of it amongst the Jews that not only Plato derived much of his philosophy, but other heathens also much of their mythology; though they did much disguise, and sometimes ridicule the notices they had thence, as our Arian now doth that of the Trinity. But this is not the business now before us.

Toward the close, he is so kind as not to desire Arianism to be imposed on others, any more than Trinitarianism on him, (page 8). But neither is this business before us, who are but disputants, not law makers.

But so constant he means to be to his cause, that he will be content to be persuaded out of his name

with his opinion. I think there is reason why he should change his opinion; but as to the changing of his name he may use his discretion. But having said much, that he might not be thought to desert it, he thinks it advisable to drop the cause; which he may, if he please, and leave it to the reader to judge of what is said.

I conclude as he doth; “It is impossible but offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come. It were better for him that a millstone,” &c.

Yours, &c.,

J. WALLIS.

Febr. 14, 1694.

A SIXTH LETTER
CONCERNING
THE SACRED TRINITY,
IN ANSWER TO A BOOK INTITLED
OBSERVATIONS ON THE FOUR LETTERS, &c.
BY JOHN WALLIS, D.D.
PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS IN OXFORD.

[PUBLISHED IN 1691.]

LETTER VI.

CONCERNING THE SACRED TRINITY.

SIR,

I FIND from my Socinian adversary, "Observations (as he calls it) on my four Letters," (he might have said five, if he pleased) which I saw not till yesterday, March 13. Nor do I see any great need of publishing a hasty answer, there being so little in it that deserves an answer, which had not been answered before it was written; and I may, perhaps, ere long, meet with some such like observations upon my fifth, and then I may at once answer both.

His first head he calls the design of the letters.

That which I undertook to maintain was clearly stated thus, that it is not inconsistent with natural reason that there may be three somewhats which are but one God; and that what in one regard are three, may in another regard be one. To prove this, and this only, I brought those arguments or instances at which he cavils.

This he now tells me, (page 4) the Socinians will grant me: that is, they grant what I undertook to prove, and of which, he says, no man ever was so foolish as to doubt; and my Arian adversary in like manner, (in his Answer, page 3, and his Vindication, pages 3, 5) that none but a madman would ever deny it, and that he cannot say there is any contradiction in saying there may be three persons in God. Thus far, therefore, we are agreed on all hands.

But he now tells me, (page 4) that this is not the question. Yes; this is the question that I undertook. It is true, there be other questions between us and the Socinians; but the question I undertook was that, and he knows it was so.

Well but what, says he, is the question? It is this, he says, (page 4) whether there be three Gods, or but one God. No; this is not the question; for in this we are agreed also. The Socinians, he says, affirm there is but one God, and so do I.

The proposition, he says, which, in favour of the Trinity, I should have proved, (that is, the task he sets me, not what I undertook) was this, that what are in one regard three, may in another regard be *so* one that all of them together are but one, and yet each of them singly, and by itself, is that one.

Now, I think, I had proved this; this *corpus longum*, *corpus latum*, and *corpus profundum*, is one cube. The *corpus longum* is a cube, the

corpus latum is a cube, and the *corpus profundum* is a cube; and yet this *corpus longum, latum, and profundum* is altogether but one cube.

But this is Latin: and his challenge is, (page 5) shew me that Trinitarian that dares dispute the question in plain English. I will endeavour that too. David the son of Jesse was a man, and David King of Israel was a man, and David the father of Solomon was a man; yet David the son of Jesse, the King of Israel, and father of Solomon was altogether but one man: and this is plain English, without the words of abstract, concrete, paternity, personality, at which he there cavils, or other hard words than what his tankard bearer might understand.

Well but, says he, we may indeed say, this long body is a cube, meaning thereby, this long body, which is also broad and high, is a cube; and if it were not broad and high it were not a cube; but we cannot say so here. I will try if I cannot hit this too. The all-wise God, is God all-sufficient; the almighty God, is God all-sufficient; the everlasting God, is God all-sufficient; meaning by the all-wise God, the God who is also almighty and everlasting; and if he were not also almighty and everlasting, he were not all-sufficient: yet this all-wise, almighty, and everlasting God is altogether but one God all-sufficient.

But supposing, says he, the doctor's instances do satisfy this difficulty, (as I think they do) does he

not know there are many more (yes, he doth know it) to which these instances are not applicable? Very true: and, therefore, they were not brought to prove all points which concern the Trinity: they were brought to prove this point in particular, that it is not inconsistent with reason that three somewhats may be one God; and if they prove this, it is what they were brought to prove. When I undertake other points, I may use other arguments. And this hath been said so often, that, if he have any thing else of moment to say, it is strange that repeating the same objection, without any further strength, he should put me so often to give the same answer.

His next head is of somewhats and persons.

We are told that Christ and the Father are one, John x. 30, and these three are one, 1 John v. 7, without giving a name to these three: nor what shall we call them? These three—what? Not three Gods, for that is false: there is but one God. And three persons he will not allow me to call them, because it is not a scriptural word: person he grants is scriptural, Heb. i. 3, but not persons. I must not call them three nothings; for certainly it was never meant to be thus understood, these three nothings are one, and when Christ said, “I and the Father are one,” he did not mean we two nothings are one. And if they be not nothing, they must be somewhat; and three such, must be three somewhats; and I could not think of a more

innocent word to design them by; and, therefore, that we might not quarrel about words, I was content to waive the name of persons, and, without fixing a new name on them, design them by the word somewhat, presuming that those who do not take them to be nothing, would allow them to be somewhat. But neither will this word pass with him.

Now this is a hard case. The Scripture says these three, without giving them a name. And then, we must not give them a name because that name will be unscriptural; and yet if we do not give them a name, he tells us they be three somewhats, without name or notion; and that no two can agree what this is, or what is thereby meant; but as many writers so many explications, (pages 8, 16).

To which I say, as to the notion, I think the Orthodox are all, thus far, agreed, that they are three such somewhats in God, as differ from each other more than what we commonly call the Divine attributes, but not so as to be three Gods. And though, within these limits, divers men may diversly express themselves, yet in this notion the Orthodox, I think, do all agree; and this I had before declared, (Letter iv, page 131) though he please to take no notice of it. So that we are not without a notion of it. And if he will allow us to give a name to it, that name, whatever it be, is so to be understood as to denote this notion. And we

think the word person a fit name to denote this notion by. But if we may not give it a name, we must then say the notion is such as was but now explained. But they will not allow us to give it a name. And as to our agreement or disagreement, I think the Trinitarians do less disagree amongst themselves than do the Anti-Trinitarians.

But, he says, (page 9) I own the word persons, when applied to God, to be but metaphorical, and not to signify just the same as when applied to men, but somewhat analogous thereunto. True; I do so. And I have given my reasons why I do so, more than once; because two of them being represented to us in Scripture under the names of Father and Son, and this Son said to be begotten of that Father, (which words are therefore not to be quarrelled with, because Scripture language) no man thinks that the one is so a Father, or the other so a Son, or so begotten, as these words signify concerning men, but somewhat analagous thereunto, and in what sense they are Father and Son, they are, in a sense analogous thereunto, two persons, and the Holy Ghost a third. For father and son, in a proper sense amongst men, are such relatives as the Latins did denote by the word *persona* in the first and proper signification of that word; and, consequently, father and son in this analogical sense are, in a continuation of the same analogy, persons in a like analogical sense.

But he says further, that in the explication of the

Athanasian Creed, (Letter iii, page 43) I interpret *σῶαι ὑπόστασεις*, by truly persons, or properly persons. I do so : because I suppose it was intended to call them truly or properly such persons as are there meant, (answering to the Greek hypostases) that is, in such a sense as they are there called Father and Son, and that the word person is a true and proper continuation of the same analogy.

I have before declared, more than once, (in the places by him cited, pages 9, 10) that the true and proper sense of the Latin word *persona* is not to denote a man simply, for this with them was *homo*, not *persona*, but such quality, state, or condition of a man, whereby he is distinguished from, or stands related to, other men, as a king, a father, a judge, and the like. And accordingly the same man may sustain divers persons; he may be a king and a father; and according as such condition varies the person also varies. It is true that in English, for want of a word that answers to *homo*, we sometimes make use of the word person when we speak indifferently of man, woman, or child; as when a man, or woman, and an infant are spoken of as three persons; but these the Latins would not have called *tres personas*, but *tres homines*; but if considered as father, mother, and child, they may, as thus related, be called *tres persone*. And the schoolmen sometimes, and some others in imitation of them, do in a like sense use the word *persona*, for want of a Latin word which did indifferently respect

men and angels. But these are new senses of the word *persona*, quite different from what the word signified in the purity of the Latin tongue, and unknown, I suppose, to the fathers, who first applied the word *personæ* to those of the sacred Trinity, as I had before shewed at large. (Letter v, page 147, &c.)

But at this rate, he tells us, (page 10) the Socinians will allow God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier, or God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be three persons. And I am not sorry to hear it; but then I would not have him say, as here, that I make them to be only three names, nor yet (as page 16) three Gods. They are more than three names, but not three Gods. For even amongst men, to be a father is more than a name or title; and, in the Godhead, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost differ more than so many names. And though I will not take upon me to determine precisely how great the distinction is, (which is what at page 8 he cites out of my Letter ii, page 26) because I would not be positive where the Scripture is silent; yet certainly it is not so great as to make them three Gods, but greater than merely three names, or even that between what we commonly call the Divine attributes.

His next head is about my explication of the Athanasian Creed, which he finds, he says, to be an explication of the damnatory clauses therein.

And he is not much amiss in that observation. He was told so in the first words of that Explication, and in the last words of the Postscript, that it was in pursuance of a clause in a former letter to that purpose; and that, though other things are explained in it, it was chiefly intended for the satisfaction of those who do believe the doctrine of it, but stumbled at those clauses, to shew that they need not, for these clauses, to reject that creed.

He tells us, (page 11) there is a difference between necessary and requisite. Be it so. But the word there is *χρῆ*, *oportet*, not *ἀναγκαῖον*, which I had rendered (pages 35, 50) by these words, it is necessary, it is mainly necessary, it is a principal requisite, he ought to believe it. And certainly, if he had not a great desire to cavil, he would not have quarrelled at this exposition as not full enough for the word *χρῆ*.

I had said this creed was part of the Catholic faith, the whole of which I took to be the whole word of God, which a man is obliged to believe as to the substantials of it; but may be saved, notwithstanding an ignorance or mistake as to some particulars of lesser moment. Now he would have it to be understood that this creed is the whole, not only a part of the Catholic faith; that nothing must be added to it, nothing taken from it: and that every man and woman shall perish everlastingly who doth not believe and profess this, without taking aught from it, or adding aught to it. Why

I think otherwise, I have shewed before, and need not repeat it, but leave it to the reader to judge whether this or that be likelier to be true, and whether he take it to be the meaning of this writer, that all must needs be damned who lived and died before this creed was written; or who possibly never saw it or heard of it, though they should believe all the substantials of the Christian faith, or Word of God, and held nothing destructive of it; or who do not believe just so much and no more. But if that be his opinion, he doth interpret it more severely against himself than I would have done, or, I think, any man who had not a mind to cavil.

His next head is about the opinions charged upon Socinus and the Socinians; concerning which I do not think it needful to trouble the reader with repeating what I had said of those opinions, (Letter iii, page 72, &c., and Letter iv, page 96, &c.) or what he now brings in excuse of it, but shall leave it to the reader to judge, upon what is said on both sides, whether I have not thereby fully proved the charge, of the slight opinion they have of the Scripture, in competition with reason, when it crosses any of their beloved tenets; and yet, if that be not enough, himself directs (page 16) to Maresius and Lubertus, where, it seems, is more to be found to the same purpose.

But his plea for himself, (page 16) I do admit, that if Socinus have spoken erroneously, or unadvisedly, or hyperbolically, he is not obliged to

defend it; nor do I know that he is obliged to be a Socinian: he may renounce of Socinus what he pleases.

Whether he who defended the thesis at Franeker were a professed Socinian, or but covertly so, I cannot tell, because I do not know the man. But I do not think it more strange to find a Socinian at Franeker, notwithstanding the synod of Dort, than at London. And sometime (page 16) he will hardly allow himself a Socinian, nor any of his party: but I hope he will not deny Socinus to have been a Socinian. Therefore so far, at least, I was right.

But he would not have me blacken a man long since dead, who never did me any injury. Very well; he had before challenged me to maintain my charge against the Socinians, and he now quarrels with me for so doing. He will now hardly allow any to be a Socinian but Socinus himself; and yet I must not blacken Socinus. What am I then to do? I will even leave it as it is, and let the reader judge: and if he doubt whether I, or my adversary, be more fair in our quotations, let him consult the places, and judge accordingly; and particularly that of epist. 5 *ad Volkelium*. I am at present not at home, nor have books about me; but sure I am that Socinus doth there, a few lines before what this Observator repeats, directly deny that the soul, after death, doth subsist, according as I had affirmed, though I cannot now recite the whole

sentence, because I have not the book at hand,* but this the repeater, whether by docking or decapitation, thinks fit to omit. And then I presume the reader will there find that *per se* is not meant so by itself, or of his own nature, as not by the gift and grace of God, for so it might as well be said of the soul before death, but so by itself as not in conjunction with the body; and then the sense must be, that though the soul with the body be *præmiorum et pœnurarum capax*, yet the soul of itself without the body is not so. But I leave this and the rest wholly to the reader's judgment, to judge, upon view, as he shall see cause; adding this also, that he will find it is not only as to this point of the Trinity that Socinus discovers so slight an opinion of the Scriptures, in competition with

* Socinus's words are these, "Velim autem scias, me duplici de causa, præter eam quam ipse commemoras, ab ista questione, de animæ immortalitate, abstinuisse. Nam et mihi res erat cum homine qui me calumniandi, inque omnium invidiam vocandi, omnem occasionem querebat. Necdum mihi, quid de questione ista statuendum sit, plane exploratum erat; quemadmodum nec hodie quidem est. Tantum id mihi videtur statui posse; post hanc vitam, animam seu animum hominis non ita per se subsistere ut præmia ulla pœnarumve sentiat, vel etiam ista sentiendi sit capax. Quæ mea firma opinio facile potest ex disputatione ista colligi: cum ex multis quæ identidem à me ibi dicuntur; tum ex ea ipsa, de qua præcipue agitur, sententia mea. Nam quamvis, cum ipso Puccio disputans, qui, ut immortalitatem primi hominis ante peccatum probaret, animi ipsius immortalitatem mihi objiciebat, ostendi, non propterea dici posse hominem immortalem quia anima ipsius non moriatur: tamen satis apparet me sentire, non ita vivere, post hominis ipsius mortem, animam ejus, ut per se præmiorum pœnarumve capax existat: cum in ipso primo homine, totius immortalitatis rationem uni gratiæ Divinæ tribuo; nec in ipsa creatione quidquam immortalis vite agnosco." *Socini Epist. 5 ad Volkellium; die 16 Novembris, Anno 1596.*

reason; but in other points also, where they do not favour his opinions.

He had told us before of somebody at Oxford, who, maintaining a thesis against the Socinians, was baffled by his opponent. Who or when this was he had not told us; nor what that thesis was. He now tells us, (page 16) it was a thesis against the Socinians, that they preferred reason before Scripture. Perhaps, when he recollects himself, or consults his informer, he may find, if any such thing happened as he suggests, it was on some other thesis, and not against the Socinians, but against the Arminians. But, be it as he says, I know nothing of it, and shall not concern myself about it.

But in requital of this story I told him another of Sandius, who having proposed a challenge, upon his *Problema Paradoxum*, contrary to the divinity of the Holy Ghost, was so answered by Wittichius, that (as appears by a printed letter published by his friend and partner in that disputation) they were so convinced as to change their opinion. I now add that it so appears, not only by his friend's printed letter, but by another of Sandius' himself to Wittichius, which I have not seen, and I think it was never printed, but the contents of it may be seen in another treatise of Wittichius, with this title, "*Causa Spiritus Sancti Victrix*, printed at Leyden, 1682."

But this matter, he says, is both unskillfully and unfairly related. Why unskillfully? why unfairly? He says Sandius was an Arian. Be it so. Not a Socinian. Very well. Nor did I say that he was; but a friend of the Socinians. He was an Anti-Trinitarian, and did promote, against the Trinitarians, the common cause of Arians and Socinians, though these, perhaps, might quarrel amongst themselves. But this Observer thought, it seems, because I did not call him an Arian, that I did not know him so to be. And this, I guess, is what he calls unskillful. But I can give him a better reason why I should not call him so. I did not then know I should have an Arian adversary to deal with, for my Arian adversary did not yet appear; but my Socinian adversary was already upon the stage, and with him I was now dealing. Yet I could not say that Sandius was a Socinian, but (that the Socinian might be concerned in the story) I said, he was a friend of theirs. And what unskillfulness appears in this? Had I then known, what since I do, that I was to be attacked by an Arian also, I should rather have called him an Anti-Trinitarian, which had been common to both: but, knowing then of none but a Socinian adversary, I chose to call him a friend of theirs, which was neither unfair nor unskillful.

Perhaps he thinks, if not unskillful, it was at least unfair to say that his partner and he changed their

opinion. But was it not so? doth not his associate expressly tell us, in the very title page of his letter of thanks for those animadversions, *per quas (animadversiones) errores suos rejicere coactus est?* whereby he was constrained to relinquish his errors? Well, but did they change all their opinions? did they relinquish all their errors? I believe not, but that opinion which was then in dispute; his *Problema Paradoxum*, and the errors therein. And, if he consult the book, he will find it was so; and that this paradox was it which he did relinquish. And what his paradox was he might there see it as well as I. Nor had he told me who, and when, and upon what question, his supposed Anti-Socinian was baffled by his opponent, or how I might come to know it; and even now, when he pretends to tell me the question, I doubt he is mistaken therein. But what unfairness was there in all this? when I had told him where he might find as much of it as I could tell him.

But he tells us now that Sandius was satisfied indeed, as to the point then in question, but not of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Nor did I say that he was. But I can tell him that he was nearer, even to this, than our Observator was aware, or at least nearer than he thinks fit to own to us. If he consult Wittichius's latter treatise, entituled "*Causa Spiritus Sancti Victrix*," he will there find an extract of a manuscript letter of Sandius to him, in which, to the best of my remembrance, for I

have not here the book at hand,* he tells Wittichius to this purpose, “That whereas in his *Problema Paradoxum* he had been of opinion that by the Holy Spirit might be meant the whole number of good angels, he did not now think so well of that opinion as before their disputation; but was considering of two other opinions to be substituted in stead thereof: that by the Holy Ghost might be meant, not the whole number of good angels, as before; but either some select number of them, as being a superior order, or else some one angel as superior to all the rest, which two he suggests to Wittichius’s further consideration. But, if neither

* Sandius’s words are these, (cited by Wittichius in his *Causa Spiritus Sancti Victricæ*, page 4) “Jam finitis illis quæ ad librum tuum regerenda duxi, præter ea quæ satis à socio meo responsum puto, oro te ne graveris ulteriùs hoc argumentum prosequi; quò tandem veritas, si fieri possit, patefiat; et velut scintilla ex silice ad chalybem alliso prosiliat. Nam ingenuè fateor, mihi conjecturam meam longè verisimiliorem visam, antequam librum tuum, quo me docere aggressus es, legissem. Non parùm et contulit ad eam debilitandam, consideratio mea, John i. 32, 33, et Matt. iv. 11. Nam postquam in baptismo Spiritus Sanctus super Christum descendit, et super eum mansit, eumque in desertum duxit, nec ab eo recessit; cum non verisimile sit Christum tentationem Satane sine Spiritus Sancti auxilio superâsse; finita demum tentatione dicuntur angeli accessisse et ministrâsse ei. Quod si itaque conjectura mea consistere non possit, ut vix possit, perpendendum erit, an non Spiritus Sanctus possint esse septem Spiritus principales; vel, multitudo Spirituum longè subtiliorum cæteris angelorum ordinibus, fortean naturâ ipsâ: et an per hanc hypothesin salvari possint omnes difficultates contra conjecturem meam hæcenus productæ. Novi quendam qui sentit, Spiritum Sanctum quidem esse unam personam, eamque creatam, sed totum universum essentiâ suâ pervadentem. Valdè autem dubito an hæc sententia subsistere queat. Illa de una persona Spiritus Sancti comprehensis sub eo angelis tanquam ejus ministris et satellitibus mihi non admodum arridet. Si autem horum nihil verum comperiat; tum demum mihi verisimillimum videbitur, Spiritum Sanctum cum Deo Patre ejusque Verbo, unum Deum, unam substantiam, unum individuum esse.

of these should succeed, (as he doubted they would not) he was then inclinable to say, with him, that the Holy Ghost was, indeed, the same eternal God with the Father and the Son." If, in reciting this by memory, I have failed in any considerable circumstance, I submit it to be rectified by the book. But if our Observator have seen that treatise, and knows it thus to be, I think we have more reason to complain of unfairness in his representing it as he doth; as if he remained fixed in this opinion, that the Holy Ghost was so a person as the Arians always held.

I am sorry to detain the reader by following our Observator in his so many long excursions which do so little concern the business before us. For what, almost, of what hath been hitherto mentioned of his, doth tend to the confutation of what we affirm, that what we call three persons are more than three names, but not three Gods?

In part of his two last leaves he would seem to come somewhat nearer to the business, but not much. He tells us, (page 17) that Luther and Calvin did not like the word Trinity.* It may be so. I will take his word for it without seeking the places, because I do not think it worth while. That they say it is barbarous and sounds oddly—I suppose he knows that by a barbarous word is commonly meant a word not used by classic authors,

* NOTE Q.

or not agreeable to the usual forms of speech in Latin and Greek writers. Be it so. And what if I had said so too? Suppose a hunter should say, a trinity of hares sounds oddly, and another say the like of a leash, and choose rather to say, in plain English, three hares, the sense is still the same. And if Calvin, who loved a smooth style and pure Latin words, should say that *Trinitas* is a barbarous word, as not extant in classic authors, what great matter is there in all this?

I will not trouble myself to inquire whether *Trinitas* be, in that sense, used in Tully; but sure I am that *τριάς* is a good Greek word. And words, though not so well contrived at first, yet when once received into common use, and the meaning thereof understood, we choose to retain, rather than to make a needless change. Thus the common phrases of your worship, your honour, your lordship, &c., for one worshipful, honourable, a lord, &c., have been noted long since, by Erasmus in his Colloquies, to be not analogous to the more usual forms of speech in Latin and Greek writers; yet custom hath made them allowable, and, therefore, we do not scruple to use them. So Luther and Calvin, it seems, thought the word *Tres* to be a better Latin word, in this case, than *Trinitas*. And I had allowed our adversary, (Letter iv, page 130) instead of Trinity in Unity to say, if that will please him better, three in one. Yet three and trinity, to my apprehension, differ no more than ten and a

decade, or twelve and a dozen. But what is all this to the matter in hand? Doth Luther or Calvin anywhere say that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are but three names? or, that they be three Gods? If they say neither of these, they do not contradict what we affirm. It is but as if a man should choose to say ten commandments, rather than a decade, or half a score; or to say there are, in the Apostles' Creed, twelve articles rather than a dozen. And if these be the great disagreements he there complains of, it comes to a very small matter.

To his argument, that only the Father is God, because of John xvii. 3, "To know thee the only true God," he says, (page 17) I give three answers. I do so. But, he says, the first and third are destructive of one another. Not so: they all agree very well, and any of them will destroy his argument. It is not said, "thee only," but "the only true God." He would have us think it all one to say, "thee only, to be the true God," and "thee to be the only true God." I think otherwise. The one gives some seeming colour for his objection; the other not the least shadow. His argument, the Father is the only true God, therefore not the Son or Holy Ghost, is just in this form—the God of Abraham is the only true God, therefore not the God of Isaac, nor the God of Jacob, which, I presume, he will not allow to be a good consequence.

He would have it thought I grant, that if it were as this form, "thee only, the true God," then the

Socinians had undoubtedly gained the point. Not so. He hath not heard me say so yet, nor is he like to do. If I should say, he that brought Israel out of Egypt, and he only, is the true God, my meaning would be but this—that God who brought Israel out of Egypt, and that God only, is the true God; and this must be understood to be said of him, not as their deliverer out of Egypt, but as God: for he was the true God, and the only true God, long before he brought Israel out of Egypt, and would have been so, though they had never been, or had never been so brought out. There may be *vera prædicatio*, which is not *καθόλας πρώτον*.*

And, of all men living, the Socinians are obliged to say that this title, the true God, or only true God, belongs to him, not as Father, but as God: for if, as they would have us think, our Lord Jesus Christ had no being before his being made man of the Virgin Mary, then neither had he a father till that time. But he was the only true God from all eternity; and, therefore, not (with this reduplication) as Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: for he was the only true God, according to their doctrine, long before the man Christ had a father, and would so have been, though this man had never been. And though Christ speak to him as his Father, yet the title of the only true God he ascribes to him as God. If Solomon should have said to David, thou,

* Non R.

father, art King of Israel; he was not, therefore, King of Israel as father of Solomon; for he was so long before he was Solomon's father, which takes away all colour of our Observator's imaginary contradiction here pretended, and leaves not the least umbrage for it.

As little force is there in his other cavil, (page 18) if the Father and Son be the only true God, then not the Holy Ghost. Yes; the Holy Ghost also; for though it be not here affirmed, yet neither is it here denied.

But these objections of his have been so often brought, and so often answered, that it is tedious to see the same things brought so often over and over again.

The like I say of what he repeats from 1 Cor. viii. 6, which is answered sufficiently, (Letter iii, page 79). Nor is it at all strange, or uncommon, that the word father should be sometime spoken of God personally considered, as Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and sometime of God indefinitely, according to his essence, without respect to this or that person. "Father of spirits," Heb. xii. 9. "Doubtless thou art our Father: thou, O Lord, art our Father and our Redeemer," Isaiah lxiii. 16. "Thou shalt call me My Father," Jer. iii. 4, 19, which the Socinians must not say to be meant as to his personality, as Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for such, they say, he then

was not, but as to his essence. “The everlasting Father,” Isaiah ix. 6, spoken of Christ, not as to his personality, for so he was Son, but as to his essence.

As to what he objects, (page 19) to that of Rom. ix. 5, “Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen,” I refer to what is said, (Letter iii, page 83) too large to repeat here. But how Amen, which is a word of asseveration, should make it nonsense, I do not understand. And what was said of God indefinitely, Rev. i. 4, is said particularly of Christ, v. 8, “Who was dead and is alive,” v. 17, 18, which description of Christ in particular he had begun at v. 5, and continues beyond this place. If he deny it, let the reader judge.

As to that of 1 John v. 7, I refer to what hath been said already. I think there is not much more to be said thereof, on either side, than had been said long before either he or I began to write. And if, after all, he resolve to hold to his opinion, he must give me leave to retain mine; and let the reader judge as he sees cause. And so for that of Matt. xxviii. 19.

As to all, in all those letters to which he makes no reply, it stands as it did: and if the reader please to read them over again he will be able to judge, whether it be all so contemptible as to have nothing of weight in it.

I have said nothing to his blustering and contemptuous language, his canting (or rather ranting) against Schools, Metaphysics, Mother Church, *Alma Mater Academia*, School terms, Gothish and Vandelic terms, Abstract, Concrete; as if long and length were all one, and all one to say David was kingdom of Israel, and the kingdom of Israel was father to Solomon, as to say this of the King of Israel, and other the like, to which he is wont to run out when he hath little else to say, but would seem to say somewhat to make a noise; because the reader would know, without my telling him, that this is raving rather than arguing. And when he tells us, so often, of “The Brief History of the Unitarians,” why might not I as well tell him, that Doctor Sherlock had answered it, and means, I suppose, to vindicate that answer, if he think there be need.

So, when he runs division upon imperial edicts, confiscations, and banishments, seizing and burning of books, capital punishments, fire and faggot, with many other things wherein I am not concerned, what is all this to me? I do not know that I ever did him any hurt, unless by discovering his errors. I was only arguing as a disputant, not making laws.

As little need be said of a many little things, as little to the purpose; as, whether my Third Letter

were not rather a book? Whether the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, are the ONLY deep things of God which we cannot comprehend, or the ONLY secret things which belong to God, while things revealed belong to us? Whether, what I knew forty years ago, I had been studying and considering forty years, without thinking of aught else all the while? Which certainly I could not be, for I was not then forty years old. Whether it be better English to say, God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier *are*, or *is* but one God? Whether *unum*, in the neuter gender, put absolute without a substantive, do not usually signify one thing? Whether the word *Trinitas* be a pure Latin, or a barbarous word, not to be found in Tully, any more than Unitarian? Whether *Tres* or *Trinitas* be the better Latin word? Whether what, in his former letter, (page 9) were but old fashioned notions, be now, in his last, new and cautious? With other the like.

But, besides that in these and many others, he cavils without a cause, what is all this to the business in hand? Or how doth it contradict what I affirm? viz.

That, what in one consideration are three, may in another consideration be but one.

That, we may safely say, without absurdity, con-

tradiction, or inconsistence with reason, there may be in God three somewhats, which we commonly call persons, that are but one God.

That, these three are more than three names, but not three Gods.

That, God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier, otherwise called God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, are such three.

I see nothing of what he hath said which doth overthrow any of these.

Yours,

J. WALLIS.

Febr. 14, 1697.

A SEVENTH LETTER
CONCERNING
THE SACRED TRINITY,
OCCASIONED BY
A SECOND LETTER FROM W. J.
BY JOHN WALLIS, D.D.
PROFESSOR OF GEOMETRY IN OXFORD.

[PUBLISHED IN 1691.]

LETTER VII.

CONCERNING THE SACRED TRINITY.

IN a Postscript to my Sixth Letter, which should have been printed with it, but came, it seems, too late, after all the sheets were printed off, I gave notice that I had received from London, the night before, (March 27) another letter from W. J., of a like import with his former, but somewhat fuller.

That what in it did directly concern me were but expressions of thanks, respect, and approbation, for which I knew not how otherwise, than by such a way, to return him my acknowledgment; because he did neither signify who he is that writes, nor do I know any in London to whose name the letters W. J. do belong.

That there were reflections in it, on some expressions of a learned author; which expressions I do not see that I am at all engaged to defend, and did, therefore, waive them.

That to say the three Divine persons are three intelligent Beings, three substantial Beings, three

Spirits, really distinct, though mutually conscious, is more, he thinks, than that learned author needed to have said, and I think so too; and that it is more safe to be less positive and particular as to what the Scripture leaves in the dark. And his answer, I think, would not have been less valid against those he undertakes to answer, though such expressions were omitted.

That I did forbear to publish that letter without his order, because I was loth to engage the learned writer thereof in a public dispute against that learned author, unless he please.

Since which time, considering that the Postscript came too late to be printed with that letter of mine, and that the letter of this reverend divine (for such I take him to be by the contents of it) seems to be penned with that care and caution as if he were willing to have it public; and without any intimation of dislike for my having published his former letter in like circumstances, I have thought it not amiss, nor unagreeable to his mind, to publish this also, which is as followeth (supplying the date from the post-mark at London, denoting what day it was given in to the Post-Office there).

FOR THE REVEREND DR. WALLIS, PROFESSOR OF
GEOMETRY, AT OXFORD.

London, March 24, 1699 $\frac{1}{4}$.

SIR,

YOUR repeated letters give me a just occasion of repeating my hearty thanks to you; and I hope you will give me leave to join both my good wishes and endeavours to promote that moderation which you seem to aim at in stating the mysterious truths concerning the Trinity. Methinks we might be easily persuaded to this, by the difficulties which all men find in conceiving those mysteries; especially the consequences which some make from them, and impose upon us as certain and sacred truths.

Sir, because I would have you lose as little of your time as may be in reading my letters, I will enter immediately upon the subject proposed, and consider, not some lesser niceties, but the two main points in the doctrine of the Trinity, and the difficulties which our understandings represent to us in the conception of them.

The two main points are these—the unity of the Godhead, notwithstanding the distinction of three persons; and the equality of those three persons, notwithstanding their derivation one from another.

Concerning the Divine persons, the hypothesis which we referred to formerly, and shall still follow, (Sherlock's) asserts these three things—first, that they are three Beings, or three intelligent Beings, really distinct—secondly, that they are three substantial Beings, really distinct—thirdly, that they are three infinite Minds, or three holy Spirits, really distinct: and to these, I think, we may of course add

a fourth character, that they are three complete Beings, really distinct.

They are not inadequate or partial beings. For a spirit infinite in perfection, as each of these is represented, can want nothing to complete its being or perfection.

Let us now, if you please, run over these characters, and observe the most obvious difficulties that occur to our minds in the conception of them.

For the first, three Beings really distinct. According to the plain tract of human reason every real being hath its essence, that is, the basis it stands upon, as distinguished from non-entity, or a fictitious being; and every distinct being hath its distinct essence, I mean numerically distinct: and, therefore, according to this principle, there ought to be three distinct essences in the Godhead, seeing there are three beings there really distinct.

Furthermore, if you give one single essence to three beings really distinct, you must either divide it, or multiply it: either each of these beings must have a piece of this essence, and then you divide it, or each must have the whole; and then, being but one whole, you cannot give it to three without multiplying it.

This is still made more difficult to conceive, when the author allows these three to be as distinct as Peter, James, and John, for if they be as distinct as Peter, James, and John, they are one but as Peter, James, and John: for every degree of distinction takes away a degree of unity, as every degree of heat takes away a degree of cold.

We proceed to the second character. The three Divine persons are three substantial Beings, really distinct. That is, in plain English, are three substances really distinct. As a spiritual being is a spirit: a corporeal being a body: so a substantial being is a substance: putting only two words for one. And the author must understand it so, because he

makes them three spirits afterwards; and, therefore, they must be three substances.

Besides, what are they, pray, if not substances? they cannot be modes, or bare relations. I know some Platonists call them super-substances; or, if you will think them lower, and call them semi-substances, as some philosophers do their substantial forms, all this is but playing with words: for there is nothing represented to our faculties but as substances, modes, or relations, excepting what is merely notional.

And the learned author must not debar us the use of the word substance, under pretence that it sounds corporeally, for two creeds make use of it, and the Scripture itself, upon a fair interpretation, Heb. i. 3.

To proceed therefore. Here are three substances really distinct, whereof each is a God, (page 47, line 13, page 98, line 23) and yet there is but one God. This is very hard to conceive, as contrary to all our ideas of number and numeration.

It is true, we may conceive these three substances in strict union one with another, notwithstanding their real distinction. But union is one thing, and unity is another. For unity excludes all plurality and multiplicity, which union doth not, but rather supposes it. Unity also, in simple natures, excludes all compositions, which union, on the contrary, always implies in one kind or other.

Accordingly, substances, upon union, are not confounded or identified, or brought to unity of substance: but continuing numerically distinct substances, acquire some community or communication of operations; namely, of such actions and passions as they are respectively capable of.

Let us consider instances of these things in the chief unions that are known to us. Our soul and body are two substances really distinct, and in close union with one

another; but, notwithstanding this, they continue distinct substances under that union. In like manner, the human soul of Christ is in union with the *λογος*, or second person of the Trinity, which we call an hypostatical union; but neither doth this union make any unity of substance; for the two substances of the Divine and human natures continue distinct under that union, which must not be allowed in the unity of the Godhead, where there can be no plurality or multiplicity of substances.

The learned author does acknowledge (pages 87, 97) that these three substances, if they were separate, would be three Gods; but, being inseparate and inseparable, they make but one. This is again uneasy to conceive, that substances really distinct should not be separable. For the notion of a substance is of that which may subsist by itself; and what mark have we of separability but real distinction? Things that are only modally or notionally distinct we allow cannot subsist separate; but if they be really distinct, as substances, why may they not be separated really? When we have proved the real distinction of the soul and the body, as two substances, we think we have sufficient ground to assert the separability of the soul from the body. And, from the same reason, we assert the parts of matter to be separable, as being really distinct substances, let their union be otherwise what it will. For, if our faculties be true, what things we clearly conceive really distinct, *ut res et res*, may, possibly, be separated. Clear and distinct conception being to us the rule of partibility.

But, however, suppose, if you please, this union indissoluble; this does not change it into unity. If the soul of man was made to be in perpetual conjunction with matter, as some Platonists affirm, that doth not make matter and the soul one and the same substance; nor matter cease to

be matter, or the soul a spirit. So, if you suppose these three Divine substances to be under an indissoluble union, that doth not make them cease to be three substances, but it makes them three substances in an indissoluble union.

What the learned author says concerning matter and extension, may be returned upon him in reference to the Godhead, (page 80, lines 9, 10). He supposes extension to consist of parts, if they be only assignable parts, whether they can be divided or not. So, say we, according to this opinion, the Godhead may consist of several substances, if they be only assignable substances, whether they can be divided or not: and you may as distinctly assign, by your understanding, three substances in the Godhead, that of the Father, that of the Son, and that of the Holy Ghost, as you may assign three parts in a physical atom, by A, B, C.

Lastly, there is no substance lost or destroyed in this or any other union, dissoluble, or indissoluble: therefore, as to substances, they are the same, whether in conjunction or separation.

We come unto the third character, (pages 50, 166, 258, see also page 93). The three Divine persons are three infinite Minds, or three holy Spirits, and yet but one God. This rises still higher than the former as to its unconceivableness. It seems to say and unsay the same thing with the same breath. An infinite spirit is completely a God, as to essence and attributes: therefore three such are three Gods. *Omnis mens infinitè perfecta est Deus; tres sunt mentes infinitè perfectæ; ergo tres sunt Dii.* Where is the fault of this syllogism?

This character seems to assert three infinities; whereas the Athanasian Creed, which stands at the highest pitch of any, is yet very tender and cautious in giving the number three to any thing but the persons. It will not allow three

eternals, nor three incomprehensibles, nor three almighties: but three infinites include all these.

An infinite spirit, as I said before, is a God, (I mean, infinite in perfection, as our author doth) and three spirits, whereof each is infinite in perfection, are three Gods; as, three creatures, whereof each is a rational animal, are three men. Both these propositions go upon the same ground, namely, that the definition, and the thing defined, are reciprocal and of the same extent. Now as we have no better definition of a man than that he is a rational animal, so neither have we a better definition of a God than that he is a spirit infinitely perfect. And as so many animals rational, so many men; so likewise, so many spirits infinitely perfect, so many Gods.

I speak this according to the use of our faculties; for what the true and precise state of things is, in themselves, when the question is concerning infinite natures, I do not presume to determine.

But thus much, I think, we may safely determine, that in such cases where our faculties are at a loss, the safest way is to keep close to revelation and the words of Scripture. And that is the conclusion I drive at.

Lastly, to put a plain question, which will come into every one's mind—here are three spirits infinitely perfect; either they are Gods, or they are creatures? They must be one of the two. When we speak of a spirit infinitely perfect, we describe an absolute, complete, entire Being, which must be of some denomination, either a God, or a creature, for we know nothing of a middle nature betwixt these.

Possibly they will answer this by a distinction; namely, that they are three Gods, considered separately; but considered collectively and in union, they are but one God; and seeing they cannot be really separate, it would be

improper to call them three Gods. But, pray, why not as properly three Gods as three infinite spirits? seeing these terms, a spirit infinitely perfect, and a God, are terms equivalent or identical. What partiality is it then to allow the one, and not the other? And if these infinite spirits be inseparable, why do you grant the number three to that name, and not to the name of Gods? seeing they are both the same thing, and equally inseparable.

We observed before that this learned author is liberal in his threes; three intelligent Beings, three infinite Minds, three holy Spirits, three divine Glories, three Majesties, but not three Kings. It is the name, it seems, is scrupled rather than the thing.

Sir, I will add no more upon these heads, but will consider now the grand principle which is designed to take off all these difficulties, and that is mutual consciousness; whereby all these threes are made one, and reduced to a perfect numerical unity.

I need not spend time in telling you what the author means by mutual consciousness, nor how he applies it to the present case. You know them both sufficiently. But methinks this unitive principle is defectively expressed by the word consciousness. For bare consciousness, without consent, is no more than bare omniscieny. As God is conscious of all our thoughts, good or bad, and of all the Devil's thoughts, without union, as without consent. If a good and bad angel were made mutually conscious of one another's mind, they would not thereupon become one, being still of different wills and inclinations.

It may be the author will say, consciousness involves consent, as he says, knowledge involves power, or is the same with it. But, besides that I cannot well reconcile the author to himself in this point, (see page 9, lines 3, 4, compared with page 72) I have given you instances, in a

former letter, to the contrary, to which you may add, if you please, this farther consideration, if knowledge be the same thing with power, then actual conception is the same thing with actual execution: and if so, then you and I may sit quietly in our studies, and, with our thought and pen, build palaces and take towns and cities; for we know the methods of both, and can distinctly conceive them and delineate them. And as these are not the same thing in us, so neither can we conceive them, in all respects, the same in God: for, from all eternity, God had a clear idea of the frame of the world, and of the manner of producing it; therefore, if God's conception or knowledge had been the same with his power, the world had been produced from eternity.

But to proceed. Let us give this principle its full strength, consciousness, and consent: they would not together make a perfect unity of operations in the Deity, much less of substance. We noted before, that unity and union are different things: and this is more apparent now, when three spirits are to be united into one. For how that can be done, without some sort of composition, is an unconceivable mystery. You may indeed conceive these three spirits, singly and separately, as simple beings; but if you conceive these three simple beings united into one, without annihilation of any one, that one must be a compound being, according to our conceptions.

Then, as to unity of operations: besides the energies peculiar to the Father and the Son, this author allows (page 67) that every one of these three minds, notwithstanding their union, hath some distinct consciousness, not common to the other two: therefore the Godhead, which consists of these three minds, cannot be one as a single mind is one, where there is an entire community and sameness of consciousness in all operations.

In my opinion, if this hypothesis were pressed to speak out, the plain language of it would be this—there are three divine substances, three holy Spirits, infinitely perfect, and, in truth and reality, three Gods; but, for some reasons, not fit to be called so. These three beings, by similitude of nature, mutual consciousness, consent, co-operation, are under the greatest union possible; and, in that state of union, do constitute the τὸ Θεῖον, the entire all-comprehensive Godhead. This, I confess, looks something like a conceivable thing; but the Christian Trinity does not use to be represented thus: for this amounts to no more than a kind of hypostatical union of three Divine Spirits.

Sir, I will trouble you no farther upon the first general head, the distinction of the persons. I proceed now to consider the equality of the persons, which I will despatch in a few words.

The first argument against their equality may be this, (page 99, line 29, &c.) the Father is ἀυθυπόστατος, self-existent, self-originated; whereas the other two are ἐτερυπόστατοι, existent and originated from another. Now this cannot but make, according to our faculties, not only some difference, but also some inequality: for it is a fundamental perfection to be self-originated, and what is not so is not equal to that which is so.

You will say possibly, though the Son and Holy Ghost are produced of the Father, yet it is not in such a way as creatures are produced: that is, by a voluntary external act; but this, by an internal, necessary, and emanative act.

We will allow your distinction; and admit that the Son and Holy Ghost have a different origin from that of common creatures. But this does not remove the difficulty. It shews, indeed, a great difference and inequality betwixt any of the Divine persons and bare creatures; but it does

not shew any equality amongst the Divine persons themselves. It is true, the dependence which a creature hath upon the Creator for its being is of another kind and degree from that of the Son or Holy Ghost. But, however, they are derivative beings, in some way or other, and dependent upon the Father. And we cannot but conceive some inequality betwixt an original and a derivative, a dependent and independent being.

Secondly, that act whereby the Son is generated by the Father is some energy and perfection. Nay, it is an energy of the highest perfection, because the result of it is the most perfect being that can any way be produced; or the noblest and greatest product in things. Creation, or that energy that produceth a creature, hath not a term or effect so noble or so great as that energy whereby the Son is generated: and, consequently, it is not so great a perfection to create a world, as to generate the Divine *λογος*. This being so, there is, you see, not only self-origination in the Father, which is not in the Son: but also an active perfection, of the highest degree possible, in the one, which is not in the other: and, therefore, we cannot in either respect conceive these two Beings equal.

Besides, if you make them all three equal, and all infinite, they will be co-ordinate. (I mean internally and as to perfection of nature: for, external subordination, as to economy, signifies nothing in this case) and are no more one than three individuals of the same species are one; that is, than Peter, James, and John are, or may be one. And this, I think, was the doctrine of the Tritheites, or very near it.

Lastly, you may please to reflect upon the various sentiments and expressions of the ancients, concerning the dignity and pre-eminence of the Father, (which you know are noted by Petavius, de Trin. lib. 2, c. 2, and line 8,

c. 9, § 15) and consider their consistency or inconsistency with perfect equality.

Sir, as I do not write this with any disrespect to that treatise, which contains many excellent things, so neither to represent absolute truth or untruth; but the difficulty of our conceiving things of an infinite nature. From which consideration I would willingly infer two conclusions.

First, that we ought to keep close to Scripture in these mysterious doctrines.

Secondly, that we should not impose consequences humanly made, with the same rigour as divinely revealed truths.

The Anti-Trinitarian system is not at all suited to my genius: yet I would not stretch our Trinitarian doctrine so far as to set it at a distance from Scripture as well as from reason. "Secret things belong unto the Lord; but those things that are revealed belong to us and our children," Deut. xxix. 29. And the angels, it may be, think us as foolish and ridiculous for pursuing these notions, farther than as they are revealed, as we think ourselves wise and learned in such pursuits.

I am, SIR,

With all sincerity,

Your most humble servant,

W. J.*

* NOTE S.

TO THIS LETTER I REPLY AS FOLLOWETH.

TO THE REVEREND W. J.

SIR,

I AM obliged to you for the kind and respectful character which you are pleased to afford me in both your letters. I am not at all displeas'd, but thank you for it, with a like moderation in your's to what you commend in my letters, as to the mysterious truths concerning the sacred Trinity; and do fully close with what you say in the conclusion, that the angels may think us as foolish and ridiculous for pursuing these notions farther than they are revealed, as we think ourselves wise and learned in such pursuits: like as you or I should laugh at a blind man, who had never seen, that should undertake to conceive in his mind, and express to us in words, a distinct and perfect notion or idea of sight, light, and colours.

He may hear the noise or sound of those three words, supposing him, though blind, not to be deaf also, and may believe that they signify somewhat; but what that somewhat is he cannot tell, having never had an idea thereof in his mind, nor a perception thereof by his senses.

And if you or I, from that notion which ourselves have of it, would explain it to him, we could do it no otherwise than by the use of such words, in a sense analogical, as do properly belong to somewhat of which he hath, from experience, some idea.

Sight, we might say, is a certain kind of sense or feeling in our eyes, which we have not in our hands, feet, or other parts of our body, whereby we can, as it were, feel with our eyes the shape, figure, bigness, and proportion of a body at a distance, as we might with our hands, if within our reach. Whereby he might apprehend that there is some kind of resemblance between seeing and feeling; but what indeed it is to see, he cannot comprehend.

Light, we might tell him, is a necessary requisite to such a feeling with our eyes, as that for want of it, which want we call darkness, we can no more so feel, or discover, by our eyes, such shape, figure, or bigness, than we could with our hands that (suppose) of a piece of money locked up in a box which we could not open; but, by the admission of such requisite, we are enabled so to feel it with our eyes, as we might with our hands, if the box were opened whereby we might come to handle it.

Colour, we might tell him, is somewhat of such a nature, as that on a plain board, or the like, on which, by our hand, we can feel nothing but smooth and uniform; by it may be represented, to be so felt with our eyes, as great variety of shapes and

figures, (suppose of a horse, a bird, a ship, a house, or any shape whatever) as by our hand we might, if we had such shapes formed in wood or stone, and the different motions of such.

But, after all this, it is not possible for this blind man to have that idea or notion in his fancy of sight, light, and colour which we have who see.

And it is much more impossible for us, who have no notions in our mind, other than what we derive mediately or immediately from sensible impressions of finite corporeal beings, to have a clear and perfect notion of the nature, unity, distinctions, or attributes of an infinite spiritual being; or otherwise to express them than by some imperfect analogies or resemblances with things we are conversant with, and by words in a borrowed sense from such.

I do, therefore, fully agree with you in your two conclusions; namely, that it is safe and prudent to keep close to Scripture in these mysterious doctrines, since we know nothing of them otherwise than as there revealed; and not to impose consequences of human deduction with the like rigour as divinely revealed truths. For, even in common affairs, when things are represented only by the analogy or resemblance which they bear to some other things, it is seldom that the similitude is so absolute between them, but that there is some dissimilitude likewise; much more when the distance is so great as between finite corporeal beings and what is infinite and incorporeal. So that we

cannot always argue cogently from the one to the other.

And, therefore, the words nature, essence, unity, distinction, father, son, person, beget, proceed, and the like, when applied to God in a borrowed sense from what they properly signify as applied to creatures, must not be supposed to signify just the same, but somewhat analogous to that of their primary signification; nor consequences thence to be deduced with the same rigour.

It would be mere cavilling for any to argue, that because knowledge and strength are separable in man, therefore, what in God we call by those names are so in God; and that, consequently, it may be possible for the all-wise God not to be almighty, or the almighty God not to be all-wise.

So, if we should argue from the manner of our locality or duration, to God's ubiquity without extension, and his eternity without succession, the inferences must needs be lame and inconsequent, with other inferences of like nature.

And, even without proceeding to infinites, if we suppose a spirit, or the soul of man, to be void of parts and local extension, and therefore, as the phrase is, *tota in toto et tota in qualibet parte* of that space or matter to which it is compresent; and should yet argue, as you do in a like case, "If one single spirit be compresent with three or more really distinct parts of space or matter, we must divide or multiply it: either each of these extensive parts

must have a piece of that spirit, and then you divide it; or each must have the whole, and there being but one whole, you cannot give it to each without multiplying it:" such inference, upon such a supposition, which supposition I am loth to think impossible, must needs be lame.

Yet such are commonly the cavils of those who study to pick quarrels with the doctrine of the Trinity as delivered in Scripture. And, in particular, though, amongst men, three persons are sometimes, not always, so used as to import three men, we may not thence conclude that the three Divine persons must needs imply three Gods: or, if the word persons do not please, though I think it a fit word in the case, we can spare the word without prejudice to the cause, for it is the notion rather than the name that we contend for, and content ourselves to say, they be three somewhats which are but one God: or, we may so explain ourselves, that by three persons we mean three such somewhats as are not inconsistent with being one God.

And hitherto, I suppose, that you and I do well enough agree.

Now, as to what you observe concerning the learned author, Dr. Sherlock, I shall begin where you end; and agree with you, that the treatise, to which you refer, contains many excellent things. The strength and weight of his arguments, as to those to whom he undertakes to answer, doth not

depend upon those expressions against which you object. But his arguments against those are of equal force, though these expressions were spared.

As to those expressions of his, by you noted, that the three Divine persons are three Beings, three intelligent Beings, three substantial Beings, three holy Spirits, really distinct, even as distinct as Peter, James, and John; and one God only, as they are mutually conscious; I was, I confess, unsatisfied therein, as you are, from the first; looking upon them as expressions too hardy for me to venture upon, and so I find are most others with whom I have discoursed about them, and wish he had declined them.

Yet I did not think it necessary for me to write against them, though I did not like them, but chose rather to waive them, and express myself otherwise. For it would be endless, if I should make it my business to write books against every one who hath some expressions which I cannot approve, amongst many others wherein I think he doth well. Nor shall I aggravate the objections which you have urged against them, but leave them as they are.

I might, perhaps, mollify some of his expressions, by putting a softer sense upon them than at first view they seem to bear; for I find some men in such matters, do use words at a very different rate from what others do; but I have not, where now I am, the book at hand, and have read it but

once, a good while since, when it first came out; and, therefore, am not willing to say much without book, lest I should miss his sense, or not perform it to his mind.

That learned author may, if he think fit, so vindicate or explain those expressions as he shall judge convenient: or he may, which I had rather he should, decline them, without prejudice to his main cause; which, in my opinion, he may as well defend without them, and thereby less expose himself to the cavils of the Anti-Trinitarians, who are catching at every colourable pretence of objecting, though not against the main cause concerning the Trinity, if but against some expressions of those who maintain it.

Thus far, I think, he and both of us do agree; namely, that there is a distinction between the three more than merely notional, and even more than that between, what we commonly call, the Divine attributes; yet not so as to be three Gods, or more Gods than one, which is as much as we need maintain against the Anti-Trinitarians; and that the word person is no unfit name to denote that distinction. And thus far we may close with him, notwithstanding some other inconvenient expressions.

And if it be agreed that these three, thus distinguished, are but one God, (each communicating in one and the same numerical essence) then they are all equal, as to that common internal essence,

and the common attributes thereof; and then an external subordination, as to economy, you grant, signifies nothing in this case.

Now, sir, if you look back upon your own discourse, you will find that the whole edge of your arguments is directed against those expressions, three Beings, three Substances, three Spirits; and I do acknowledge that, as to these, the arguments seem to me sharp enough, and to do their work. But if, instead of these, he say, as I think he should, that the three persons are one Being, one Substance, one Spirit, like as he says they are one God, that edge will be taken off.*

That, I conceive, which did impose upon him in this point, is the forced sense which, in our language, we sometimes put upon the word person, for want of another English word answering to *homo*, which might indifferently respect man, woman, and child; and a like forced sense put by the schoolmen upon the word *persona*, for want of a Latin word which might equally relate to men and angels, as signifying an intelligent being. Whence he was induced to think, that three persons must needs be three intelligent beings. Whereas *persona*, in its true and ancient sense, before the schoolmen put this forced sense upon it, did not signify a man simply, but one under

* Augustin. Epist. 174. Spiritus est Deus; et Pater Spiritus est, et Filius, et ipse Spiritus Sanctus; nec tamen tres Spiritus, sed unus Spiritus; sicut non tres Dii, sed unus Deus.

such, and such, and such circumstances, or qualifications. So that the same man, if capable of being qualified thus, and thus, and thus, might sustain three persons, and these three persons be the same man.

Now if, as he says of himself elsewhere in a like case, he have not been taken to be a fool; yet a wise man may sometimes, upon second thoughts, see reason to change his opinion, as in that case he did, or rectify his expressions. And if then he consider how much easier it will be, and less obnoxious to exceptions, to maintain his hypothesis thus rectified, he may think I have done him no ill office thus to suggest.

Having thus given you my thoughts of this hypothesis, if you press me farther, as between ourselves, to tell you what degree of distinction, as in our metaphysics they are wont to be reckoned up, I take this to be between the three Divine persons, I think we need not much trouble ourselves with such niceties. And if I do tell you, it is only *ex abundantia*, as what doth not much concern the main question in hand, which is safe enough without it. Nor that I so prescribe therein, as to require others to express their sentiments just as I do.

The degrees of distinction commonly mentioned in our metaphysics are such as these—*distinctio rationis ratiocinantis*, which is purely notional, and depends merely on our imagination: *distinctio rationis ratiocinatæ*, which is otherwise said to be

secundum inadæquatos conceptus ejusdem rei: distinctio modalis, either *ut res et modus*, or *ut modus et modus*, which is otherwise said to be *ex parte rei sed non ut res et res*: and *distinctio realis*, or *ut res et res*. Though, in the names of these several degrees, all writers do not always speak alike. One, perhaps, by a distinction *ex parte rei*, may mean the same which another means by *distinctio realis*; and so of the rest. And these, thus marshalled, are but a contrivance of our own. They might, for aught I know, have been made more or fewer, if the contriver had so thought fit.

But these degrees of distinction I take to be primarily fitted to our notions of created beings, and are not intended as applicable to God, otherwise than by analogy; as other words properly fitted to created beings are wont to be so applied: and, therefore, I should choose to say, that, in strictness of speech, our metaphysics have not yet given a name to these distinctions; nor do I know any need of it.

The Divine attributes, we use to say, are distinguished *ratione ratiocinata*, or as *inadæquati conceptus ejusdem rei*. And it is well enough so to say to those that have not a mind to be captious, but are willing to understand figurative words in a figurative sense. But, to those that have a mind to cavil, I would speak more cautiously, and say, it is, in God, somewhat analogous to what we so call in created beings, and, that of the Divine

persons, somewhat analogous, in the Deity, to what, in created beings is called *distinctio modalis*, or *distinctio à parte rei, sed non ut res et res*.

If it be asked, what that distinction is which is thus analogous, I say, that I cannot tell. You must first tell me, and enable me to comprehend, what is the full and adequate import of the words Father, Son, beget, proceed, &c., when applied to God, in a sense analogous to what they signify as to created beings. If you cannot tell me, precisely, what they are, how should I tell you how they differ?

But what need we trouble ourselves with these niceties, or names of these degrees of distinction? which, when we have all done, will by divers men be diversly expressed. I think it is enough to say, the distinction is greater than that of what we call the divine attributes; but not so as to make them three Gods; or, that they be so three as yet to be but one God, and I am content to rest there.

I am, SIR,

Yours to serve you,

J. WALLIS.

April 11, 1691.

AN EIGHTH LETTER
CONCERNING
THE SACRED TRINITY,
OCCASIONED BY
SOME LETTERS TO HIM ON THAT SUBJECT.
BY JOHN WALLIS, D.D.
PROFESSOR OF GEOMETRY IN OXFORD.

[PUBLISHED IN 1692.]

LETTER VIII.

CONCERNING THE SACRED TRINITY, OCCASIONED BY SOME
LETTERS TO HIM ON THAT SUBJECT.

SINCE my publishing seven Letters, and three Sermons, concerning the sacred Trinity, I have received, on that occasion, several letters from divers persons, some known, some unknown, concerning that subject; mostly by way of gratulation and approbation of what I have done: and where some expressions therein are not just the same with mine, they are much to the same purpose, and not at all contrary to what I undertook to maintain.

One of them, (from an unknown person) subscribed A. B., was written, it seems, by a country gentleman, not a professed divine; who, though he do not pretend to be much versed in school divinity, yet is, I find, not a stranger to it. It was left for me at my bookseller's, with an intimation that the author was willing to have it printed; and I left it again with the bookseller for that purpose, though it hath been delayed hitherto, which (because the author did desire it) is as followeth.

A LETTER TO THE REVEREND DR. WALLIS, OCCASIONED
BY HIS SEVERAL LETTERS TOUCHING THE DOCTRINE
OF THE TRINITY, &c.

REVEREND SIR,

It is gratitude and acknowledgment directs these lines to you. I have been so fortunate to meet with your several letters in affirmance of the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, &c., and cannot but confess myself not only confirmed, but much enlarged in my notions about that doctrine by the so plain and pressing reason of your discourses. But lest I should seem fond of my own understanding, and fancy to myself that I do comprehend more touching these matters than I indeed do, I shall humbly offer to you my method of thoughts, and submit the same to your grave judgment and allowance.

The Metaphysicians, I remember, teach us that one way to know the Deity is by way of eminency. Is there any good or perfection in the creature? Then, say they, God that is the great author and cause of all things, must be so in a more eminent and high degree. The attributes of God are competent to man, whom he made after his own image, in some measure, but in God they are in the highest and superlative degree.

Now, besides these eminences and perfections in the Deity, there are three more particular and more transcendent eminences, wherein and whereby God hath manifested himself to and for the good of mankind.

God almighty was pleased, in his infinite mercy, to determine that mankind should be rescued from that state of sin which the defection of our first father brought us

into, and be brought back into a state of salvation. But how he should bring about and effect this great work is out of the reach of human contemplation, and can no otherwise be known than as God himself hath been pleased to reveal and discover the same to us in the Scriptures.

Now the Scriptures intimate to us three several manifestations of the Deity in this great work of our salvation.

The first is that of a Father. That God the Father of heaven and earth, who created the world by his power, and preserveth it by his providence, so loved this world, that he sent his only begotten Son to be our Saviour and mighty Redeemer.

The second is that of a Son. That Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, undertook this great work of man's redemption, and to that purpose came into the world, and became man, a second Adam, who by his holy life, and absolute and perfect obedience to the will of God, did expiate and make atonement for the disobedience of the first.

The third is that of the Holy Ghost, who, by his inward operations and gracious influences, doth incline and prevail with man to embrace the redemption purchased for him upon the terms of the gospel.

Now in respect of these three several manifestations of the Deity, there is said to be a Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Godhead, and the same God, in respect of one of these manifestations of himself, is called God the Father; in respect of another is called God the Son: and in respect of the third is called God the Holy Ghost.

That there are these three more eminent manifestations of the Deity, and under these denominations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is most plain in the Scriptures.

But the great doubt is whether these be three personalities in the Deity. And this doubt, I take it, ariseth

from a misunderstanding and mistaking the true sense of the word *persona*.

For this word *persona*, I think the philosophers are short in their definitions of it. Boethius defines it to be *naturæ rationalis individua substantia*. This other philosophers dislike as too scanty, because it is applicable to man only, and doth not include spiritual beings: and, therefore, they to enlarge it, and make it more comprehensive, call it *substantia particularis, intelligens et incommunicabilis, &c.*

But, for my part, I cannot but like Boethius's definition best, and think him so far in the right, in that he makes the word *persona* only applicable to man; for so doubtless it is in its true and proper signification; and it is applicable to spirits by a metalepsis only and transumption of the word.

And herein the philosophers are too short in their definitions of *persona*, that while they dote so much upon the word substance, they forget that accidents are a more necessary ingredient in its true definition.

The word *persona*, in relation to man, doth not only signify individuality, and denote a particular or single man, but it doth imply those qualities also whereby one man differeth from another. By the word quality here I do not mean the single predicament so called, but all the other predicaments, except that of substance, it being those whereby the *naturæ rationalis substantia* is individuated. It is quantity that differs the person of taller stature from the lower. It is quality that differs the learned from the unlearned person. It is relation that differs the father from the son. It is the *ubi* or locality that differs John of Noke from John at Style. And so of the other predicaments.

I would, therefore, propose the adding a few words to

Boethius's definition, and then, I think, it will be well enough. Let it then be thus, viz., *persona est natura rationalis individua substantia taliter qualiter ab aliis differens*. Thus defined, it relates to man only, and so to one man as he differeth from another by accidental individuation. For though it be true that every person is a single substance, yet it is as true that they are accidents that do determine the personality.

And as the specific differences do constitute the species, so predicamental accidents do constitute the individual. Thus rationality doth constitute the species of man, and differs it from that of the brute. And thus wisdom, fortitude, &c., do differ this particular man from another, and make him to be this person and not another. Nor can we have any certain notion of naked substances, or otherwise conceive of them than as they are clothed with and variegated by accidents.

To this purpose also is the true sense and meaning of the Greek word *υπόστασις*, which, strictly translated, is in Latin *subsistentia*. Now *subsistentia* doth not only import the *esse* of the substance, but the *modus essendi*; and what is that doth modify substance but qualities and accidents.

The fundamental mistake, therefore, in this great point hath been in making the word substance so more than necessary in the definition of *persona*, and concluding from thence that there cannot be three persons, but there must be three several substances. Whereas, in truth, there may be in the same one particular man, diversly qualified and circumstantiated, diverse personalities. Thus in the man Melchisedec. Melchisedec, King of Salem, may be said to be one person, and Melchisedec, the priest of the Most High God, another. So in David, in respect of his double qualification of a king and a prophet.

Thus much for what I conceive to be the true notion of *persona*.

Now to consider this word *persona* as it hath been applied to the Godhead. And here I must say again, as I said before, that this word *persona* is used only in a borrowed sense, and for want of another word that might more appositely and fully signify what is intended by it.

God cannot properly be said to be a person. There are no accidents in him. All his attributes are essential to him. That wisdom that is finite in man and accidental to him, is infinite in God and essential to him. And so of all the other attributes and perfections of the Deity, that are in an imperfect and low degree competent to man.

In this borrowed sense, therefore, it is that this word *persona* is applied to the Deity; and in respect of those three eminent manifestations of the Deity there are said to be three persons in it. Not that the word person, and distinction of personalities in respect of men, doth bear a full analogy to the difference of personalities in the Deity; for in this, as in all other contemplations of God, we must expect to fall short and not comprehend. But that the consideration of the different personalities amongst men may help us, in some imperfect measure, to conceive of that Trinity that we adore in the Unity of the Godhead.

Objection. But here I expect an objection, that if in respect of these three manifestations of the Deity there are said to be three persons, why are there not said to be more persons in the Godhead than three, even as many as there are divine attributes, for so many are the manifestations of the Deity to us?

Answer. There is not so much reason to imagine more personalities in the Godhead than these three, as that there are these three and no more. For although it be

true, that every attribute doth import the Deity, and can be predicated of nothing else but the Deity, yet every single attribute doth not, if I may so speak, import the whole Deity. His infinite wisdom doth not necessarily import or administer to us the notion of his infinite power. And so of the other attributes. But these three several manifestations of the Godhead, that are called three persons, are such wherein the whole Deity, as I may say, doth exert itself, and appear in all its attributes; and, therefore, I call them three more transcendent eminences or manifestations of the Deity.

Thus I do conceive this Trinity of persons in the Godhead in some sort intelligible, without any necessity of thinking that these three persons must be three several substances, and consequently three Gods.

And I must confess I cannot but think this great dispute a mere wrangling business, and a contest more about words than things. For at the same time that our adversaries are so fearful of multiplying the Deity by dividing the substance, we tell them that we believe in one God only, and that these three persons in the Godhead are but one God. So that all the dispute is, whether to say there are three persons in the Deity doth necessarily imply that there are three substances, which we declare we do not mean nor intend by it. And for my part, if they will as fairly declare that they believe these three several manifestations of the Deity, viz., of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, as held forth to us in the Scriptures, I would willingly compound with them for the word person, and comply with them in the use of any other word they shall find out that may better, or as well, express what we mean by it.

I come now to the other great objection of our adversaries, touching the hypostatical union. How the Divine

and human nature could be united in the same person, and this person be at the same time both God and man, and this without multiplying or dividing the Deity, or without confining the Omnipresent to the scanty tenement of a human body; how this God-man should be born of a virgin by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and human nature propagated without the natural help of a man: these things seem so utterly impossible to these men of great reason, that therefore they must not, cannot be; and the Scriptures themselves must rather be mistaken or false, than that can be true which they think cannot.

But when they argue thus from impossibility, I wonder their curiosity doth not question the creation itself, how it was possible for God to make all things of nothing. And for the hypostatical union, methinks, before they question that so strictly, they ought to give a better account than yet can be given of the union of the soul of man with his body. And when they question the being born of a virgin, may they not as well question how the first woman was made of the rib of a man: one as well as the other being supposed to come to pass by the divine power.

But because I am apt, with you, to suspect how far the Scriptures are of authority amongst these reasoning men, I will adventure to propose to them one consideration touching the hypostatical union, to shew that it is not so inconceivable a thing to human reason as they would have it.

Let them but consider the several degrees of beings that God hath made in the world. The trees and plants to which he hath given vegetation. The brutes to which, besides vegetation, he hath given animal life, senses, and appetites to discern and endeavour after what is necessary to the preservation of their beings. Then to step farther and consider man, to whom, besides all these, God hath

given a rational mind and soul. And to step yet farther, let them consider those higher beings the angels, what pure intellectual beings they are, and what degrees of perfection God hath given them, beyond what he hath given to man.

I say when we consider these, what necessity is there of limiting and confining God almighty here? May we not as reasonably think, that if in his infinite wisdom he so thought fit, he might as well make a being yet more perfect? Why is it not as conceivable, that, to bring about his own eternal purposes, he might actuate the human nature by the divine power, and make a man in whom even the perfections of the Deity should reside?

Is the principle of essentiality and vitality any whit divided in or from the Deity by giving life and being to those creatures?

Is the Eternal Mind any whit multiplied or divided by giving a rational soul or mind to man?

Nor is the infinite and eternal Spirit of the world multiplied or divided by creating and giving being to those glorious spirits the angels.

What necessity then to think that the Godhead must be either multiplied or divided, or in anywise varied by acting the Divinity in the human nature?

Oh! rebellious mankind, that hast offended thy Creator; but more ungrateful, that wilt not accept his mercy upon his own terms, and believe it exhibited in that manner that he himself has revealed it!

Is it not that God, whose justice is infinite, that is offended? Is it not the same God, who is also infinite in goodness and mercy, that is appeased? What room for his mercy, without derogation to his justice, unless there be satisfaction? And what satisfaction can be competent to the offended Deity? Were men or angels fit to mediate,

or could they make a satisfaction? Surely not. It is his infinite mercy only that can appease his justice. “There is mercy with him, that he may be feared; yea, mercy rejoicing over judgment.”

Now because it is inconceivable to man how the offended Deity should make a satisfaction to itself, God almighty is pleased thus far to condescend to the capacity of human nature, as to tell us in what manner he hath done it, viz., that he hath sent his only begotten Son into the world to be born of a woman, to live a life of righteousness for our instruction and example, and to die the death of sinners to satisfy for our defection. And farther, that our original taint might not prevail over and misguide us into actual transgressions, he hath sent his Holy Spirit amongst us to lead us into the ways of truth and righteousness. This he was pleased to promise after the fall, by his prophets in the times of the Old Testament, and has now performed it to us in the times of the New.

Now, is it fit for us to object against this manifestation of his mercy to us, and glorious contrivance of our redemption, because we cannot comprehend the mystery of it? That surely was never meant to be within our fathom.

In the days of the Old Testament, when God was pleased to command the adoration and duty of his people, he manifested himself to them under several appellations, whereby he put them in mind of his mercies to them, and their duty to him. “I am,” says he, “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And so in the prologue to the Decalogue—“I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,” &c. Intimating thereby to them the great mercies he had shewn in his miraculous preservation of the patriarchs and people of Israel.

So now, in the days of the New Testament, God almighty has been pleased to manifest himself to us under other denominations and appellations, viz., those of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: intimating thereby to us in what manner he hath made good his promised merey, and brought about the great work of our redemption; and that, under those appellations and manifestations of himself, he will now be worshipped in the times of the gospel.

But for us to understand the great mysteries of our salvation in this manner offered unto us, viz., that of the Trinity in the Unity of the Godhead, and that of the Incarnation of our blessed Saviour, &c., was certainly never intended by God almighty. And shall we doubt what God himself tells us because we cannot comprehend it?

When God said to the people of Israel, "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt," &c., had it been fit for them to have inquired how he brought them out of Egypt, and to have ravelled into all the miracles he wrought for that purpose, and to have brought them to the touch of their understandings, and to have doubted the truth thereof, or the power of God that did them, because they could not reconcile them to their own reason?

Yet thus ill certainly do they use God almighty, who will doubt the manner of our salvation, because they cannot understand the mystery.

Alas, vain men, that will not believe what God himself has revealed, because it will not bear the test of their weak reason! Do they think the wisdom and power of the Almighty are to be bounded by the scanty limits of their understanding? That were for what is finite to comprehend infinity. God were not God if that were so. And

these very men, who value themselves so much upon their reason, that they think they ought to understand the very arcana of heaven, would, I doubt not, be ready enough by the same strength of reasoning, to disown that Deity that they could comprehend.

Thus I have presumed, reverend sir, to trouble you wit' this draught of my rude notions about this matter, which I hope you will excuse, they coming from a private country gentleman, unread in polemic divinity, and particularly in this dispute, and in whom these thoughts were occasioned by the perusal of your late papers.

I am, SIR,

Yours most humbly,

A. B.

May 28th, 1691.

THIS letter being for substance much to the same purpose with what I had undertaken to maintain, and the expressions not much different, and in nothing contrary to it, I shall not detain the reader with any long discourse upon it; because it speaks sufficiently for itself. But I think three manifestations is too faint an expression, and the difference between the three persons is eternal and antecedent to these manifestations.

It hath been suggested to me by another anonymous, that we, knowing so little of the infinite divine nature, there may possibly be greater distinction between the three, which we use to call hypostases, or persons, than, what he calls, the civil or relative acceptation of the word person, and we may as well prejudice the truth by affirming too little, as by affirming too much. And it is very true, there may be, for aught we know, (and perhaps there is) more than so, nor have I any where denied it. But how much that more is we cannot tell. Sure we are, not so as to be three Gods, or more Gods than one. And I choose to say, with St. Austin, that these three are one Spirit, (as we say they are one God) not three Spirits. The true ancient import of the word person, when first

applied to the Trinity, implies no more than as I explained it; which was a full answer to the Anti-Trinitarian's popular argument, from the modern gross acceptance of the word person, in English, as if three Divine persons must needs be three Gods, because three persons amongst men doth sometimes, not always, nor did it anciently so, imply three men. And when we say these three persons are but one God, it is manifest that we use this metaphor of persons, when applied to God, as borrowed from that sense of the word person, wherein the same man may sustain divers persons, or divers persons be the same man. I have seen, more than once, an address from Edward Earl of Clarendon, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, to Edward Earl of Clarendon, Lord High Chancellor of England, in a claim of privilege, to remove a cause from the Court of Chancery to that of the University. Yet these two chancellors were not two men, nor two Earls of Clarendon, but one and the same, sustaining two persons, one addressing to the other. And if this do sufficiently answer that popular cavil, it is as much as it was brought for. If it do otherwise appear that the distinction between these three Divine persons be more than so, but yet not more Gods than one, that may well enough be, though this metaphor do not necessarily imply so much. It is certain, that three persons, neither according to the true import of the words, nor according to the intent

of those who so speak, doth imply three Gods; but three persons which are one God, or one God in three persons.

I have also a third letter from W. J., much to the same purpose with what he had written in his two former, and, therefore, I do not think it needful to insert it here; nor do I see that he desires it. It is, he tells me, to take his leave of me, as not meaning to give me any farther trouble in this kind. It is full of divers expressions of respect, thanks, and approbation; and he doth insist, as in his two former he had done, upon these two things, not to be too positive, in these matters, beyond what the Scripture tells us; and, not to lay the like stress upon our argumentations from thence as on what we find there. In both which, as before I did, I do fully agree with him; because, in matters of pure revelation, we know no more than what is revealed: and, because it is very sure, that even in natural things men do oft mistake in their argumentations from principles which they think to be true and clear; else it could not be that divers men, from the same principles, should infer contrary conclusions; and because we find it difficult, sometimes, to reconcile some things which yet we cannot well deny to be true. And, if it be so, even in natural things, much more may it be so in things of an infinite nature. So that herein, I think, he and I do not disagree.

Yet would I not infer from hence, nor doth he, that we must therefore be sceptics in all things, because it is possible that in some things we may mistake. For it is one thing to be infallible; another thing not to err. A man who is not infallible may yet argue truly, and where he doth so his argument is conclusive; and we may accordingly rest in it, and insist upon it, more or less, according to the degree of evidence: for things equally true are not always equally evident, nor equally necessary to be known. Where the evidence is not clear, and the matter not needful for us to know, we are not to be too positive in our determinations, but rather be content to be ignorant farther than God is pleased to reveal; but where it is, and the things be of moment, we must hold fast that which is true, and not suffer ourselves to be easily wheedled out of it.

Which, I suppose, is his opinion as well as mine: for he seems to interpose this caution, particularly, as to that hypothesis to which, as before he had done, he doth suggest some new difficulties; but wherein I am not concerned. That God is *Trinus*, he doth profess; and the word person he doth not dislike; but thinks it safe not to be too positive in determining precisely how great that distinction of persons is. In all which I do concur with him.

Now as to the word person, though I am not fond of words where the sense is agreed, I am not

willing to quit it, because I do not know a better to put in the room of it: and because, if we quit the word, which the church hath with good reason made use of for so many hundred years, without any just exception made to it, those Anti-Trinitarians who would have us quit the word will pretend that, in so doing, we quit the doctrine too.

That we do not by person, when applied to the sacred Trinity, understand such a person as when applied to men; and that, by three Divine persons, we do not mean three Gods, hath been so often said, and so fully, by those who believe the Trinity, that those who cavil at it, cannot but know it; but, by person in the Deity, we mean only what bears some analogy with what, amongst men, is said of several persons, (even without being so many several men, which the true sense of the word person doth not import, as hath been often shewed) as do the words beget, begotten, sending, proceeding, or going forth, and many more, which all are metaphorical expressions, taken from what amongst men is wont to be said of persons; for, of whom but persons are such expressions used? And they who use to cavil at it may as well do it when we talk of the foot of a stool, the arm of a chair, or the head of a staff, and persuade us, that when we so speak, we do believe a stool, a chair, a staff to have life and sense, because a foot, an arm, a head, properly taken, have so. And

they may as well cavil at the word sacrament, which is a name that we have given to that of baptism and the Lord's supper; attributes, which is a term we give to some of the divine perfections; creed, by which we mean an abstract of some principal things that we believe, and a great many such other words that we find occasion to make use of; whereof yet there is no danger, when it is defined and determined what by such word, in such discourse, we mean; even though, in some other discourses, such word may signify otherwise. It is well known that a cone in Euclid doth not signify just the same as in Apollonius; nor a triangle in Euclid just the same as in Theodosius and others, who write of spherics: but when we meet with these words in Euclid, we must there understand them as they are defined by Euclid; and when in others, so as they are defined by those others. And so when we speak of persons in the Deity, we must be so understood as we there define; that is, for somewhat analogous, but not just the same, with what is meant by it, when applied to men; and particularly not so distinct as to be three Gods.

And, for the same reasons, I am not willing to part with the Athanasian Creed, lest those who would have us so do should then say, we have parted with the doctrine also. They, upon pretence that some expressions in it, though true, are not absolutely fundamental, would fain wheedle us

out of all. They might as well say, that because some words might be spared in what we call the Apostolic Creed, or Nicene Creed, or some other words put in, therefore those creeds should be laid aside also. And when they quarrel with the preface of it, “Whoever would be saved, ought to hold the Catholic faith; and the Catholic faith is this,” as if it were intended thereby that every syllable in it were so fundamental as, without knowing whereof, a man could not be saved, (which no man can reasonably think to be so meant by the penners of it, since that thousands were saved, even in their opinion, before that was penned, and others since, that never heard of it) is mere cavilling. For no more can reasonably be thought intended by it, but that this is sound doctrine, which, for the substance of it, ought to be believed by those who would be saved: like as if I should say, whoever would be saved, ought to believe the Word of God; and this is the Word of God, pointing to our Bible. No man who is not mad would think my meaning to be, that no man could be saved who did not know that one of Job’s daughters was named Jemima; or that Zeruah was mother (not father) to those who are called the sons of Zeruah.

As to that question, which I meet with in some of the letters, why just three persons, and no more. The answer is short and easy. Because the Scripture tells us of three, but of no more;

and, had not the Scripture told it us, we had not known of these three. We are baptised into the name of, and therefore into the faith of, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as if this were the first Christian creed. We are told, there are three that bear record in heaven, and, these three are one: not that there are more such than three, and to these three (somewhats) we give the name of persons; meaning, by the word persons, these three; and if by persons in the Deity we mean but these three, then there are but three in the Deity whom we call persons, or, whom we mean by that name.

There is another ingenious person* (a stranger to me) who hath written to me divers letters on this occasion, full of gratulation, approbation, and applause; but in one of them he moves a question concerning a passage in one of mine, where I say, “We have no notions in our mind other than what we derive, mediately or immediately, from sensible impressions of finite corporeal beings;” and tells me, “That it seems to him that the notion of ONE INFINITE ESSENCE should be excepted;” and that he hath formerly vindicated Des Cartes against Mr. Hobbes, who had affirmed, “That there is no conception in a man’s mind which hath not at first totally, or by parts, been begotten upon the

* NOTL. T.

organs of sense :” and again, “That a man can have no thought representing any thing not subject to sense.”

But, in a following letter, he declares himself fully satisfied, and that my sentiments do not really differ from his, when I had sent him this answer, viz.

“As to what you say of my affirming that we have no notions in our mind other than what we derive, mediately or immediately, from sensible impressions of finite corporeal beings, when you consider it again, I believe you will be of my mind. If you can suppose a man in such circumstances as never to have seen, or heard, or felt any thing, I doubt whether he would have any thoughts of God more than an embryo yet unborn, who hath the same soul that he will after have, but hath, I doubt, as yet, no notions of a God. Sure I am that we attain it by other steps. ‘The heavens declare the glory of God;’ but not without being seen, or at least heard of, or some way made known to us by sensible impressions. ‘The invisible things of him, even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen;’ but it is ‘by the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made.’ But if we neither see, nor hear of, nor have any notion of the things that are made, how shall we thence derive the notion of a God? and there must be many notions, antecedent to that of one infinite essence, which must

be derived from sensible impressions of corporeal beings. We must have the notion or conception of *ens, esse, finis, finitum, non-finitum, unum, non-nullum, non-multa*, before we can have the notion of one infinite essence. And those antecedent notions, I think, we do derive, mediately or immediately, from what we see, hear, feel, or some way apprehend by the help of our senses. As to Des Cartes, there must be a great many notions, or simple apprehensions, which he must presume, before he can come to the complex notion of *Deus est*, and a great many illative notions, from natural logic, before he can argue *cogito, ergo sum*. He must, at least, have a notion, or simple apprehension, of what is meant by *cogito*, and of what is meant by *sum*, and of what by *ego*; and then a complex notion, that what is not cannot think; and then this illative notion from natural logic, but I think, therefore I am. And, I doubt, he cannot come at all this without some use of his senses. And even after all, it seems to me, that to be is a notion more simple, and therefore antecedent, than to think; and, therefore, sooner to be apprehended by itself than by consequence from that. But it is not now my business to dispute against Des Cartes; only to shew that sensitive notions are subservient to our notions of a God; and, from these our understandings do, by steps, ascend to these."

Upon this answer, he owns my sentiments to be the same with his, &c.; that, in a natural way,

the human intellect hath no operation but what is occasioned or suggested by sensible objects. But he thinks, I perceive, and so do I, that from these notions occasioned or suggested by sensible objects, our intellect, or reason improved, may ascend, by steps, to a discovery of something concerning God, which in corporeal objects it cannot find. In which we both agree.

Now the best means we have for the forming of such notions concerning God, is chiefly by one of these two ways; that of eminency, and that of negation. Whatever of good or excellency we find in the creature, we conclude that in God, who is the fountain of all excellency, there is somewhat analogous thereunto, but much more eminent; and whatever of imperfection we find in the creature, we conclude that in God, who is infinitely perfect, there is nothing of this imperfection: and from both we conceive a notion of somewhat in God which is more great than is possible for us fully to comprehend; but what that somewhat is we cannot fully understand. Now these being the steps by which we form these notions, we know no better way to express these conceptions than by metaphors taken from such objects from whence these notions take their rise, or some such figurative expressions, and it was with this prospect that I mentioned that observation; and in the same way God is pleased, in Scripture, to express himself to us; by somewhat analogous, not just the same, with what we meet

with in the creature. As when it speaks of God's eyes, ears, hands, feet, &c. ; of his seeing, hearing, striking, going, &c. So when the Father is said to beget, the Son to be begotten, and both these to send out, and the Holy Ghost to proceed or go forth from them. All which expressions are such as we commonly apply to what we call persons. And in what sense those are to be understood concerning God, in such sense they are fitly called three persons; and those who, in such sense, cavil at the word person, would, no doubt, if there were not somewhat else in the wind, as well cavil at those other words. But because so to do were directly to affront the Scripture, whose words they are, they do not think fit so to speak out, whatever they think. When Christ saith, of himself and the Father, John xvi. 28, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father:" of himself and the Holy Ghost, v. 7, 8, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you; and when he is come, he will reprove the world," &c.: of himself and the other two, John xiv. 26, and xv. 26, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you:" and again, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which

proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me;” what could be said, as of three persons, more distinctly? And if the Scripture speak of them as three persons, why should we scruple to call them so? But these three persons are but one God. οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι. These three are one; *unum*, not *unus*, one thing, 1 John v. 7, and John x. 30, “I and the Father are one,” ἓν ἔσμεν, *unum sumus*, we are one and the same thing, and therefore one God, and that there is no other God but one, is known to be so often said that I need not repeat it.

But it is not so much the word person, as the deity of Christ, which these men are offended at; and all their cavils at the word person, and the Athanasian Creed, are but to undermine our Saviour’s deity. Of this I have said enough elsewhere, and need not here repeat it. “The Lord our God is one Lord,” Deut. vi. 4: that is, the Lord God of Israel is one Lord; or, Jehovah the God of Israel is one Jehovah. There are not more Jehovahs than one; and this one Jehovah is the Lord God of Israel. And Isaiah xlv. 3, 5, “I the Lord (Jehovah) am the God of Israel: I am the Lord, (Jehovah) and there is none else, there is no God beside me.” No God beside the Lord God of Israel. So in 2 Kings xix. 15, and many other places to the same purpose. Now our Christ is this Lord God of Israel, Luke i. 16, 17, “Many of the children of Israel shall he (John the Baptist) turn to the Lord their God (to the Lord God of

Israel) and he (John Baptist) shall go before him (this Lord God of Israel) in the spirit and power of Elias.” Now no man doubts but that it is our Christ, whose forerunner John Baptist was, and before whom he was to go in the spirit and power of Elias: therefore our Christ is this Lord God of Israel; this one Jehovah.

It is true that the Greek Septuagint’s translation of the Old Testament doth not retain that word, but doth every where waive the word Jehovah, and puts *ὁ κύριος* instead of it; and accordingly, the New Testament, which mostly follows the language of that, the only Greek translation then in use, doth so too. But *ὁ κύριος*, which they substitute for Jehovah, is so oft applied to Christ, even in those places cited out of the Old Testament wherein Jehovah is used, that none can be ignorant of it.

And though we have not there the word Jehovah, yet we have as full a periphrasis of it as can be desired. It is well known, and owned by all, that the two proper names of God, Jah and Jehovah, are derivatives from the verb *hajah* or *harah*, which signifieth to be, which, whether we take for one and the same root, or two roots of one and the same signification, is not material, the letters *jod* and *vau* in Hebrew being so oft used promiscuously, or one changed for the other; and, therefore, the noun verbal must needs import a being. And it hath been farther observed long since by Hebricians, that the name Jehovah hath moreover the peculiar

characteristics of the three times: (past, present, and future) *Je* the characteristic of the future tense; *Ho* of the present tense or participle; and *Va* of the preter tense, which I did forbear to mention formerly, lest they should throw it off as a criticism, till I had a fresh voucher for it, so good as Dr. Pocock, in his late commentary on Joel i. 19; and we have all this in that character of God, indefinitely, Rev. i. 4, ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος, καὶ ὁ ἦν, καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, from that Being, who is, and hath been, and shall be for the time to come; and it is particularly applied to Christ at v. 8, Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, λέγει ὁ κύριος ὁ Θεὸς, ὁ ὢν, καὶ ὁ ἦν, καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ, “I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord God, (Jehovah Elohim) which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty;” which is a full account of the name Jehovah, here translated, as elsewhere, by ὁ κύριος, with a descant upon it, importing his being, with the three diversities of times, (past, present, and future) and his omnipotence superadded. “That Being which now is, which ever was, and which ever shall be, the Lord God Almighty,” so Rev. iv. 8, and Rev. xi. 17; and in Rev. xvi. 5, ὁ ὢν, καὶ ὁ ἦν, καὶ ὁ ἐσόμενος, so Beza, and so Dr. Pocock reads it, and so ours translate it; and much to the same purpose is that Rev. i. 11, 17, 18, Rev. ii. 8, and elsewhere, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last; he that liveth and was dead, and behold I live for evermore;” so Rev. iv. 9, 11,

Rev. v. 12, 13, 14, "Who liveth for ever and ever." Which fully answers that title, "The living God," whereby the true God doth so oft distinguish himself from other gods, as Jer. x. 10, and elsewhere frequently. But I have said so much formerly to this point that I shall now add no more.

I had almost forgotten one piece, wherein I find myself mentioned, intituled, "A Suit for Forbearance," &c.* It aims chiefly at two things. One is against "urging on others too strict an union, wherein Christianity, as delivered by our Lord and his apostles, hath left a latitude and simplicity." But herein, I think, he hath no cause to blame me, nor do I see that he doth. He doth not find me to trouble him with cramping scholastic terms. I know not how I could speak more tenderly than to say these three are three somewhats, not three nothings, and if he please to sport himself with that he may; and that it is convenient, to these somewhats, to give a name; and that I know no better name than persons; and, therefore, that we may still say, as we were wont to do, three persons and one God; even though by person I do not require men to fancy just such a person as what we so call amongst men; like as by father, son, beget, &c., I do not understand, in God, just such as what these words signify amongst men; and I do

* NOTL. U.

not know how he could wish me to speak more tenderly, or more agreeing to the Christian simplicity, wherein it is delivered by our Lord and his apostles.

The other is, he thinks it not advisable in things “sufficiently settled by just authority, as is that of the Trinity, to revive a controversy long since determined, and draw the disputations saw; because to litigate about a fundamental, is to turn it into a controversy.” And herein I am so much of his mind, that I would not have advised to start the controversy about what we have been in quiet possession of for so long a time; and I am ready to own, that it is an art of our adversaries the Papists to persuade the world that we have no better ground for the doctrine of the Trinity than they have for transubstantiation, for they care not what they overthrow, if thereby they may advance their own ends; and that atheistical and irreligious men will be glad of any opportunity to ridicule religion.

But if others will make it their business to run down religion, and profess to the world there is nothing but authority to define it, which they despise, and no reason or Scripture for it, more than for transubstantiation, I think we are not obliged to stand (all of us) so silent as if we had nothing to say for it, or yielded up the cause. There is a middle way for the promoting what he calls a purer and more scriptural divinity, between a rigor-

ous imposing all the scholastic cramping terms, and a giving up the cause. A modest defence of what the Scripture teacheth us, without excursions into a rigorous pressing of extravagant niceties of our own inventions, may be of good subserviency to shew that the doctrines of our religion are not inconsistent with right reason.

What he tells us of somebody who had been heretofore Master of the Temple,* that did express himself to this purpose, “The substance of God, with this property, to be of none, doth make the person of the Father; the very selfsame substance in number, with this property, to be of the Father, maketh the person of the Son; the same substance having added to it the property of proceeding from the other two, maketh the person of the Holy Ghost: so that, in every person, there is implied both the substance of God, which is one, and also that property which causeth the same person really and truly to differ from the other two.” This, I say, would pass with me well enough; and if he please so to express himself I should not quarrel with it.

Again, if I should express it thus, that God, considered as the original or fountain of being, who himself is and gives being to all things else, may be called God the Father, or the God and Father of all; and the same God, as the fountain

of wisdom or knowledge, be called God the Son, *ὁ λόγος*, the word, wisdom, or reason, “the true Light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” God’s wisdom resulting from his essence or being; and the same God as the fountain of power, might, or action, be called God the Holy Ghost, God’s power of acting proceeding from his essence and wisdom also; and that this eternal, all-wise, and almighty God is one God; perhaps he would not much mislike this: or, if he should, I would not quarrel with him on that account, or be positive that it must just be so. We know that Christ is called the Wisdom of God, the Son of God, the Son of the Highest; and the Holy Ghost is called the Power of the Highest. And we know that, amongst ourselves, knowledge results from the essence of our soul, and action proceeds from both. It is said also, that “in him we live, and move, and have our being;” from God we have our being, our rational life, and our motion, in whose image and likeness we are created. Yet would I not be positive, much less would I require every one to be of that opinion, that the personalities in God must needs be these. I am content to rest here, that these three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whatever name you call them by, differ in somewhat, more than what we commonly call the divine attributes; yet not so as to be three Gods, or more Gods than one, but are one and the same God. And so far we be safe. Nor is there

any danger, that I can see, in giving the name of persons to these three, nor know I a fitter name to give them.

And this, I think, is as much as need be said as to all those letters which, on this occasion, have come to my hand since the publishing of those already printed; there being nothing in all these which is contrary to what I therein undertook to defend: nor should I have said thus much, if the author of the letter here inserted had not desired to have it published. And now I hope to trouble the press no more upon this occasion.

Yours,

JOHN WALLIS.

November 23, 1691.

NOTES.

PAGE 10. NOTE A.

The writings of St. Augustine, and in particular his work *De Trinitate*, furnish many resemblances of this description. It is to be lamented that what this admirable father adduced as affording some illustration of the internal relations of the Trinity, (mind or intellect, self-knowledge and love, or self-complacence,) was afterwards adopted by the indiscreet devotion of his followers, the schoolmen, as an exact and precise explanation of the doctrine itself. This has led to a charge against them from many quarters, as if they had held that the personal distinctions in the Trinity were merely modal or nominal. The slightest reference to the works of the great masters, Peter Lombard and Aquinas, or to the conclusions of Scotus, as explained by his only intelligible interpreter, Rada, is, however, quite sufficient to satisfy any fair or candid inquirer that the distinctions held by them were real and substantial distinctions. Whether some later divines, as for instance, Dr. Arthur Bury, in his *Naked Gospel*, 1690, 4to, and the acute and ingenious Stephen Nye, in his three Tracts on the Trinity, did not adopt the explanation of St. Augustine as a plausible cover for Sabellianism or Unitarianism, must be left to their readers to judge.

With every respect to the injunction of the incomparable Donne, "It is a lovely and a religious thing to find out vestigia Trinitatis, impressions of the Trinity, in as many things as we can," (*Works*, vol. II. p. 216) few can read the following passage from Luther's *Collogia Mensalia*, (Edit. 1650, fol.) p. 101, without finding it necessary to make a liberal allowance for the allegorical spirit of the age. "Trinitas omnibus creaturis indita. In Sole, substantia, splendor et calor. In Fluminibus, substantia, fluxus et potentia. Sic in Artibus quoque. In Astronomia, motus, lumen, et fluentia. In Musica, tres note, Re, mi, fa. In Geometria, tres divisiones, linea, superficies, et corpus. In Grammatica, tres partes orationis. In Dictione apud Hebræos, tres literæ substantiales. In Arithmetica, tres numeri. In Rhetorica Dispositio, elocutio et actio seu gestus, nam inventio et memoria non artis sed naturæ. In Dialectica,

definitio, divisio et argumentatio. Sic quælibet res habet pondus, numerum et figuram. Sic herbæ et flores habent, 1. Formam, quâ, significatur Deus Pater, ejusque potentia. 2. Odorem seu saporem, quæ nota est Filii, ejusque sapientiæ, &c. 3. Vim et vires, seu effectus, qui sunt vestigia Spiritûs sancti, ejusque bonitatis. Ita licet in omnibus creaturis invenire et cernere Trinitatem divinam im pressam esse."

The most extensive collection I have ever met with of similar parallels or fancied resemblances, is contained in a work written by the celebrated opponent of the Socinian Zwickler, John Amos Comenius, *De Christianorum Uno Deo Patre, Filio, Spiritu S^o. Fides antiqua*, Amstelodami, 1659, 12mo. The title of the chapter is "Deum esse Triunum, omnes pariter attestantur Creaturæ." (pp. 30 to 41.) After enumerating a series of parallels in nature and in almost every art and science, he concludes, "Et frustra hoc omnia esse credat aliquis. Profundissima omnium rerum Conditoris sapientia suspicari id non patitur. Si Etenim nos minuta animalcula, quibus vel mica rationis est, non facile volumus temerè aliquid egisse videri, quid ille cui omnis adest Sapientia et cum quo ab æterno fuit? Qui arenam usque maris et aquarum guttas, dinumerarit? Qui non solum altitudinem Cæli et profunditatem Abyssi, dimensus est, sed et montes pondere libravit, collesque staterâ? Cui denique omnia opera sua nota sunt ab æterno. Illumne tantam Ternarii mysterii segetem per Universum frustra sparsisse? Credant id, quibus stupere sapere est." Perhaps with a view of checking this prevailing passion of his age, one of the ablest of modern Protestant divines, Moses Amyrædus or Amyraut, in a very solid and judicious Treatise, now little known, published, in Latin, at Saumur, 1661, 8vo., the title of which is *De Mysterio Trinitatis deque vocibus ac Phrasibus, quibus tam in Scripturâ quam apud Patres explicatur*, examines at considerable length, and with great care, the various instances generally adduced as illustrations of the doctrine of the Trinity, and shews how unable most of them are to bear the application of the test of logic or Scripture. With respect to a favourite illustration from the sun, its light and heat, he observes, "Si quis contendat Luminare illud fuisse a Creatore ita comparatum ut dogma de Trinitate, postquam revelatum esset, nobis redderet aliquanto credibilius, non is sum qui repugnare velim. Verum hoc duo mihi contra concessum iri spero. Unum, ubi doctrina de Trinitate defendenda est non esse talibus rationibus pugnandum ad eum demonstrandam. Nam possunt quidem apud Orthodoxos aliquid facere ad veritatis illustrationem: cum tamen adversariis sunt deridiculo et honorum argumentorum pondus elevent. Alterum quod citra opem revelationis alienjus extraordinariæ, istud quidquid est, nullam Trinitatis personarum in Deo cognitionem creare potest." p. 142.

The parallel of the three dimensions of material bodies to the Trinity, which forms the basis of Wallis's following illustration, may be traced in its general idea to more than one of the Latin fathers, but the first attempt

in print that I am aware of, to make an elaborate comparison between the two subjects, appeared in the *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres* for the month of July, 1685, of which periodical work the celebrated Bayle was at that period the editor. The author of the Comparison, whose name is not known, lays down twenty-three theses or propositions applicable to a body and its three dimensions, and by corollaries to each infers resemblances in the Trinity in all material points. Objections were made to this Comparison by another writer, in the same periodical, the following month, which produced a reply from the author of the parallel in defence of his propositions. Whether Wallis had seen these papers, and was indebted to them for any parts of his illustrations, it is impossible to say. The learned Mastrofini, in his *Metaphysica sublimior de Deo, trino et uno*, the first volume of which, and the only one, I believe, printed, was published at Rome, 1816, fol., observes of the Comparison in the *Republique des Lettres*, which he has translated and introduced into that work, p. 89. “*Nihil hactenus legi quod ingeniosius fuerit excogitatum ad Divinam Trinitatem declarandam.*” He has thought it of sufficient importance to devote to its examination a chapter of considerable length (Lib. 2, c. 9), but not having seen the present Letters, labours under the mistake of considering Wallis as the author of that Comparison, and treats him so throughout, styling it “*Wallisiana Comparatio.*” The terms of his examination would, however, almost equally apply to Wallis’s parallel of a cube, and I regret, therefore, that the length to which they extend precludes the possibility of their being inserted in the present note. Their subtlety and acuteness will well repay a perusal, and the reader will have no occasion to regret becoming acquainted with what, though emanating from a Roman Catholic, may, perhaps, be styled the most elaborate and complete defence of the Trinity which the nineteenth century has yet produced.

PAGE 18. NOTE B.

It might justifiably have been expected by the excellent author, that the caution and humility with which he entered upon his designed illustration of the main article of the Christian faith, and which pervade the whole of these Letters, would have saved him from the misconstruction and vituperation of contemporary and succeeding writers. But such was not the case. The parallel of the cube was attacked, as if he had propounded it as a perfect illustration of the distinctions of the persons in the Trinity, whereas he repeatedly disclaims its adequately expressing those distinctions, and only offers it as shewing that something similar, if between finite and infinite there could be any correspondence, to the mysterious union of Trinity with Unity, was observable in a material cubical body. The other objections made to the Letters are resolvable

into two: 1st, the use of the word "somewhats," as applied to the three persons of the Trinity; and 2nd, that the Trinity which Wallis represents is the nominal Trinity of the Sabellians. With respect to the first, when we consider that language has no term which clearly defines these distinctions, for language is a mere medium, and what cannot be entirely comprehended, cannot be adequately expressed; and further, that most of the words which have been made use of for this purpose, have been found from their inevitable ambiguity to afford ground for constant cavil and controversy, there seems little justice in censuring Wallis for what affords only a proof of his judicious modesty and prudence, and his reluctance to adopt any term purporting affirmatively to define what is indefinable. It may further be observed, that more than one of the Latin fathers have applied the words "*Tria quædam*" in the same sense in which the expression "three somewhats" is used by Wallis. To the second objection that Wallis's Trinity is the nominal one of the Sabellians, it would scarcely have been necessary to have offered any reply, had not the calumny, for it is no other, been repeated, when the Letters were in few hands, with a pertinacity and confidence which have imposed upon some able and candid writers, amongst whom I may number the learned Mosheim. (Vid. *Dissertationes*, 2nd vol., p. 527. Edit. 1743, 8vo.) Now Wallis, it will be observed, does no where profess strictly to define these distinctions: on the contrary, he observes, (p. 208) "Our metaphysics have not yet given a name to these distinctions," and (p. 128) "I do not pretend to set this down as the adequate distinction, for this I do not pretend thoroughly to understand." Following the mode of treating the subject adopted by the very able Dr. Thomas Pierce (*Pacificatorium Orthodoxæ Theologiæ Corpusculum*, 1683, 12mo., p. 34), who remarks, "*Vix melius vix aliter quid sit Tri-unus intelligimus, quam quid non sit, intelligendo,*" Wallis rather makes his opinion known by negative propositions, than by dogmatical theses. He says, (p. 164) "Though I will not take upon me to determine precisely how great the distinction is, because I would not be positive where the Scripture is silent; yet certainly it is not so great as to make them three Gods, but greater than merely three names, or even that between what we commonly call the Divine attributes:" and further, (pp. 6, 10) "to each of these persons Scripture ascribes divinity," and "that they may truly be so distinguished as that one be not the other, and yet all but one God:" and subsequently, (p. 227) "I think three manifestations is too faint an expression, and the difference between the three persons is eternal and antecedent to these manifestations:" lastly, (p. 244) he expresses his acquiescence in Hooker's summary of the distinctions, (*Eccles. Pol.*, vol. 2, p. 281, Oxford edit.) which has always, I believe, been considered as a satisfactory exposition of the orthodox scriptural doctrine, and by which the extremes of Sabellianism and Tritheism are alike avoided. But it is unnecessary to accu-

mulate further proofs. No one can read the eight Letters through in the spirit of fairness and candour, without being satisfied that the Trinity held by Wallis was a real and substantial one. Of his contemporaries, perhaps no one was more opposed to the Sabellian or Nominal school than Mr. John Howe. His explanation of the Trinity seems rather liable to the objection, if objectionable at all, of admitting so high a distinction between the persons as to be irreconcilable with the unity of the Deity. Yet he, in a letter to Wallis, (*Calm and Sober Enquiry*, p. 95, edit. 1694) speaks of the "respectful thoughts and veneration" he had long had for him, and which were both renewed and heightened greatly by his (Wallis) late clear, prudent, and piously modest discourses (both Letters and Sermons) of that "awful mystery, the Trinity in the Godhead." He further observes, "In what you have already said concerning it, you have used that great caution, and so well guarded yourself, as not, so far as I can apprehend, to give an adversary in this single point the least advantage." I might adduce Dr. South and Bishop Wetenhall to the same purpose, but it is surely needless. In opposition to such authorities testifying to the orthodoxy of Wallis's explanation of the Trinity, and the irrefragable evidence of the Letters themselves, it is curious and edifying to find Messrs. Lindsay and Belsham claiming Wallis as an Unitarian. (*Apol.*, p. 228. *Calm Inquiry*, p. 337.) The reader will ask what are the grounds upon which the claim is made? Is it from an impartial examination of these Letters, and the opinions they express. Not at all. It may be questioned whether either of those two worthies ever saw Wallis's Letters, or his three Sermons on the Trinity. The only tract they seem to be acquainted with, referring to Wallis, is the well known "Considerations on the Explications of the Trinity, 1693, 4to," written by an Unitarian, and which I find attributed in my copy, but I think erroneously, to Stephen Nyc, Rector of Hormead. This tract, written against Wallis, Sherlock, and South, and in defence of the Unitarian scheme, they ludicrously enough mistake for Wallis's, and then quote as his own words the designed perversions of his opponent. Such are the heroes of Unitarianism!

PAGE 26. NOTE C.

From the *Biographia Britannica*, vol. 6, p. 3683, it appears that the author of this and the two other Letters subsequently addressed to Wallis by the same writer, using the initials W. J., was Mr. William Jane. He must not be mistaken for Dr. William Jane, Dean of Gloucester, and Prolocutor of the Lower House of Convocation in 1689, and by whom the famous Oxford Decree of 1683 against "certain pernicious books and damnable doctrines," and the Decree against Dr. A. Bury's *Naked Gospel* in 1690, are said to have been drawn up. I have been unable to meet

with any account of Mr. William Jane. The originals of his three letters are in Mr. Crossley's collection, but there is no indorsement or memorandum by Wallis which can assist the inquiry.

PAGE 28. NOTE D.

The notions alluded to are contained in Dr. Sherlock's *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and Ever-blessed Trinity*, 1690, 4to., in which he propounded a new explication of that doctrine, which occasioned a fierce controversy of some duration. He considered the Trinity in Unity to consist of "three infinite minds mutually conscious," and that this explanation solved all the difficulties of that mysterious doctrine. Not content with proposing his own views on the subject, he attacked the generally received exposition with great spirit and vehemence. Of the orthodoxy of his opinions, judging from the whole tenor of his work, and not from a few incautious insulated expressions, there seems no reason to doubt. Though he uses the terms "three distinct infinite minds," a description which taken by itself might seem to import three separate Spirits or Gods, yet it must be observed that he subjoins to it, "which are essentially and inseparably one," so that, in fact, he seems to mean nothing else by those terms but three distinct, intelligent, but not separate subsistences in the same substance. His later works on the subject of the Trinity; *Apology for Writing against Socinians*, 1693, 4to.; *Distinction between Real and Nominal Trinitarians*, 1696; *The Present State of the Socinian Controversy*, 1698, 4to., in which he is more cautious and guarded in his expressions, are all excellent tracts, and are free from the objections which were made to his "*Vindication*." His most formidable adversary was Dr. South, whose zeal, sharpened as it is said by private and political motives, led to the publication of his *Animadversions on Dr. Sherlock's book*, 1693, 4to., and his *Tritheism charged upon Dr. Sherlock's New Notion of the Trinity*, 1695, 4to., performances in which all the wit and learning, and it would be difficult to instance any books in which they more abound, cannot atone for the total absence of candour, moderation, and Christian charity. The ablest tract written in defence of Sherlock, was "*The Doctrine of the Fathers and Schools considered concerning the Articles of the Trinity of Divine Persons and the Unity of God*. By J. B., A.M., *Presbyter of the Church of England*. 1695, 4to." The author's name, I believe, was Braddock. On the promulgation of the Oxford Decree in 1695 against the doctrine asserted in a sermon, preached by a Fellow of University College in the church of St. Peter in the East, in which were the following expressions, "There are three infinite distinct minds and substances in the Trinity," and "That the three persons in the Trinity are three distinct infinite minds or spirits, and three individual substances," Sherlock, against whom the

fulmination was obviously levelled, published "A Modest Examination of the Authority and Reasons of the late Decree of the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, and some Heads of Colleges and Halls, concerning the Heresy of three distinct Infinite Minds in the Holy and Ever-blessed Trinity, 1696, 4to." Amongst the answers to this publication, was one entitled "An Answer to Dr. Sherlock's Examination of the Oxford Decree, in a Letter from a Member of that University to his Friend in London, 1696, 4to., pp. 19," of which a second edition, corrected and enlarged, was published the same year. This tract, though not included in any list of Wallis's works, nor mentioned by any of his biographers, is undoubtedly written by him. It is to be regretted that its tone is not altogether so mild and temperate as that which characterizes his eight Letters, now republished. But it would, perhaps, be too much to expect that he should have wholly escaped the heats generated by controversy. Wallis observes, "When he (Dr. Sherlock) had let fall some unwary expressions, and not justifiable, he might have retracted them with as little discredit as he has done some other; and it would be the wisest thing he could do. If he will still insist upon it, that if a person be a mind, a spirit, a substance, then three persons must be three distinct minds, spirits, and substances, p. 18, (as distinct as Adam and Abel, though not separate, p. 20) he knows it will not be allowed him: because mind, spirit, substance, are (in their proper signification) absolute; but person (in its proper signification) is a relative term. If mind, spirit, person, be equivalent, why cannot he content himself with (what is generally received) three persons, but must impose upon us his new terms of three distinct minds, three distinct spirits, and three distinct substances. The consequence will hold more strongly thus, if an infinite eternal mind or spirit be God, then three distinct infinite eternal minds or spirits are three Gods. (For here the terms are all absolute, not relative.) And if to maintain (obstinately) that there are three Gods (that is, three eternal infinite minds or spirits) be not heresy, what is?" pp. 13, 14, 15.

PAGE 33. NOTE E.

Since the publication of Waterland's Critical History of the Athanasian Creed, which first appeared in 1724, 4to., all that has been added to what his research has there collected, has served to shew the accuracy of his opinions as to the authorship of the creed, and the deductions drawn by him from the external and internal evidence he has examined, seem to have been generally acquiesced in by impartial and capable critics. According to his opinion, this creed was not composed by Athanasius, but was originally written in Latin, in France, sometime between the years 426 and 430, by Hilary, Bishop of Arles, who is said, by his biographer, to have composed an admired exposition of the creed, and whose style, so

far as we are enabled to judge from the few fragments of his works that remain, it in some degree resembles. Being a summary of the orthodox and Catholic faith, he thinks it might in process of time acquire the name of the Athanasian Faith, or *Fides Athanasii*, in opposition to the contrary scheme, which might as justly be called *Fides Arii*, or the Arian Faith; and that this equivocal title afterwards occasioned the persuasion that it was a form of faith composed by Athanasius, just as the title of Apostolical, given to the Roman creed, led to the mistake of its being supposed to have proceeded from the Apostles. This, he argues, is very much confirmed by the several tracts written in the fifth and sixth centuries, dialogue wise, in which the names of Athanasius, Arius, and Photinus are adopted for the speakers, who defend the principles and tenets of those leaders. Such is a short summary of Waterland's opinions on this subject, but it does not fall within the compass of this note to enter fully upon the history of the Athanasian Creed, or the elaborate grounds upon which Waterland rests his conclusions. I shall merely remark, that there are few greater theological desiderata than a new edition of Waterland's history, which is a model of well applied research and judicious disquisition, with notes correcting the mistakes he has occasionally fallen into, supplying his omissions, and embodying the valuable remarks of the Continental scholars since his period. I trust to see this undertaken by some one whose theological acquirements render him competent to such a work.

PAGE 41. NOTE F.

The dispute which long subsisted between the Eastern and Western Churches, as to the procession of the Holy Ghost, seems, on close examination, to have been a dispute merely as to terms, and involving no material difference of belief. The Eastern Churches preferred saying that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father by the Son, or when they said, He proceeded from the Father, they also added, He received of the Son. According to either mode of expression, the same thing seems to be substantially meant, as the Western Churches expressed by the terms, "proceeding from the Father and the Son," the Spirit receiving (i. e. his Essence) from the Son being equivalent to proceeding from Him. See Bishop Pearson on the Creed, p. 324. Ridley's Sermons at Lady Moyer's Lectures, p. 37. Waterland on the Athanasian Creed, p. 141, edit. 1724.

PAGE 53. NOTE G.

In Wallis's own copy of these Letters he has written in the margin Mrs. Hunt, as the person referred to. I am unable to add any further particulars to the name and notice supplied by him.

PAGE 65. NOTE II.

Who was the author of this tract, which was published without title page in 15 pages, in 1690, 4to., is not known. His reply to the remarks of Wallis was contained in a tract, entitled "Observations on the Four Letters of Dr. John Wallis, concerning the Trinity and the Creed of Athanasius. London, printed 1691, 4to., 20 pages." Both these pieces were afterwards included in the first of the five 4to. volumes of Socinian or Unitarian tracts, which were published at the close of the seventeenth century, and which are understood to have been printed at the expense of the well known John Firmin. It is surprising that so little should be known of the writers of these tracts, who certainly do not yield in controversial dexterity, or skill in profiting by the occasional slips of Trinitarians, to any of the advocates of Trinitarianism who have subsequently appeared upon the stage. The author of the tract mentioned in the text, appears to have written, besides the "Observations," a small work, first published in 1689, 12mo., but afterwards inserted in the first volume of the 4to. Socinian tracts, which gave rise to Dr. Sherlock's vindication, and, indeed, to the whole controversy. It is styled "A Brief History of the Unitarians, called also Socinians, in Four Letters, written to a Friend." He also wrote "An Accurate Examination of the Principal Texts usually alledged for the Divinity of our Saviour, occasioned by a Book of M. L. Milbourne, called 'Mysteries in Religion Vindicated,' 1692, 4to.," and "Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity, by Dr. Wallis, &c., 1693, 4to.," which last tracts were included in the second volume of the 4to. Socinian tracts. On the title page of a copy of the "Considerations on the Explications," now in my possession, some one has written "By Stephen Nye, Rector of Hornead, Herts." Besides, however, the disavowal of Nye himself, in his "Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, 1701, 8vo.," which is not certainly as explicit as it might have been, there does not seem to be such a similarity between the style of the tracts in question and Nye's acknowledged productions, as to lead me to suppose that the former were written by him. In the piece on which Wallis animadverts in the Postscript to his third Letter, the writer assumes the flimsy disguise of a friend of Wallis's, anxious for his character and reputation, but who, when pressed by a Socinian opponent who is introduced for the purpose, gives up the cause of his supposed friend and the doctrine of the Trinity, without any attempt at a defence.

PAGE 70. NOTE I.

Sherlock's confutation of this history is complete and triumphant. Wherever, indeed, he was pitted directly against the open adversaries of the Church, the Roman Catholic, or Socinian, he seldom leaves any-

thing to be wished for, and few have been more eminently successful in treatises of a practical kind. His work on *Death and Future Judgment*, which South made the subject of his bitter and well known sarcasm, is entitled to a high place amongst practical treatises, and is, perhaps, the only one of his writings which is now generally read. His political delinquencies, as his taking the oaths was considered at the time, and the imputation of Trithemism, in which it seems to be now generally admitted he had harsh measure dealt him, have contributed to throw undeserved discredit upon his voluminous writings. There is yet so much that is really sound and excellent in his theological works as, in my opinion, to justify, if not an entire republication, at least a copious selection from them. On the great doctrine of the Incarnation, few divines can, I am convinced, be pointed out who have written more forcibly, clearly, and scripturally than Sherlock. I should be glad to find him not forgotten in the republications, which the improving taste of the present time is originating and encouraging.

PAGE 85. NOTE K.

See Wallis's second Sermon on the Trinity (edit. 1691, pp. 42—50) for further remarks on this vexata quæstio. The reader who wishes to see an accurate statement of the arguments pro and con, may refer to Horne's Introduction, vol. IV., p. 485, edit. 6th; and Orme's "Memoir of the Controversy respecting the Three Heavenly Witnesses, 1 John, v. 7, 1830, 12mo.," will furnish him with an historical account of the controversy itself. At present, the general tendency of opinion amongst scholars is strongly against the reception of the seventh verse. Since the death of the venerable Bishop Burgess, its strenuous defender, no writer of eminence has, as far as I am aware, undertaken the championship of the text. It would be absurd to deny that the bishop and his predecessor, the archdeacon, were overmatched by their opponents. Travis, though no contemptible writer, and still less deserving of the epithet "wretched," which the rancour of sectarianism has taken at second hand from the quiver of the infidel, sunk, as who would not, under the joint onslaught of Porson and Marsh, and Burgess, with infinitely better scholarship, but scarcely fitted by logical, or discriminative, or even, perhaps, critical powers for the task he undertook, waged the war with but indifferent success against the Quarterly reviewer and vindicator of Porson. Still, admitting the failure of particular controversialists, defenders of the text in question, I doubt, if with all humility I may be permitted to do so, whether the battle is yet won, and whether the point can yet be considered as conclusively settled. One argument in favor of the retention of the verse, the testimony of Cyprian, has never appeared to me to have been sufficiently answered. I am fully aware of all that has been urged

by Porson (Letters to Travis, p. 247) in the Quarterly Review, (No. 62, p. 82) and the Vindication of Porson, (p. 381) but the arguments adduced to prove that the passage in Cyprian's treatise de Unitate, which has been so frequently cited, is not in fact a quotation of the disputed text, but a mere allegorical deduction from the eighth verse, or an inference drawn from the words of Tertullian, ingenious and plausible as they may appear at first sight, are anything, in my opinion, but solid or convincing. The quotation corresponds so closely with the text, that its force cannot be evaded by any hypothesis, however finely spun, from conjectures and presumptions. Let it be remembered, too, that no doubt exists as to the words of the passage in Cyprian, which has been quoted by Fulgentius and Facundus. Its genuineness, as it now stands, *ipsissimis verbis*, is admitted by Porson, (Letters, p. 264) and, indeed, has never been disputed. The treatise in which it appears, Cyprian's death taking place A.D. 258, was written in the earlier part of the third century, and is unquestionably the work of that father. So that we have to decide, not between the MSS. of Cyprian and the Greek MSS. of the New Testament, as the point is stated by the Quarterly reviewer, (No. 65, p. 79) but between the evidence of a Latin father, who quotes the verse in the third century, and the evidence of the earliest Greek MSS. of the New Testament, which a century afterwards omit it. In such a question, it is not the multitude of proofs which is so material. One witness sufficiently clear and distinct on the point in issue, is worth fifty who come after a long lapse of time; nor can difficulties derived from the silence of contemporaries, diminish the effect of one positive and irrefragable testimony. To such cases the old law maxim may be applied, *Qui prior est tempore potior est jure*. In conclusion, I cannot but think that the late Bishop of Salisbury would have been more successful in this interesting controversy, had he reduced it into narrower limits, and had not his anxiety to accumulate proofs and arguments, without regard to their relative value, militated against their individual weight and validity.

PAGE 89. NOTE L.

For an excellent, grammatical, and philosophical disquisition on the word "persona," I would refer my readers to Amyraut, de *Mysterio Trinitatis*, p. 436. He gives the history of its various meanings, and shews indisputably from the passages of Cicero, which he quotes, that the great Roman orator used it frequently in its ultimate signification of a man, or an intelligent being, as well as in its primary one of a character, capacity, title, or office, borne or sustained by an individual. I regret that its length precludes my extracting it here. The latitude of meaning which the word is capable of bearing, without violating the propriety of

the language, might, perhaps, have originally rendered it desirable to have selected some other term, more precise and less ambiguous. It is now so far engrafted into our confessions of faith, and its theological meaning is so well ascertained and determined, that no change or substitution could conveniently be made. Of the controversies from Boethius downwards, which this word has given rise to, a curious history might be written. Valla was the first, I believe, who used the quotation from Cicero in the text, "Tres personas unus sustineo," to settle the meaning of the term as applied, in a theological sense, to the Trinity. Amongst those who so used it before Wallis, it is singular enough to find his antagonist Hobbes, (vid. Appendix ad Leviath. p. 342, edit. 1668, 4to.) who makes it the key stone of his explanation of the Trinity. The work of Clendon on the word person, which Dr. Parr has praised, and which was published in 1710, 8vo., is a confused, illogical, and rhapsodical production, the object of which is to prove the Sabellian notion, that the Trinity is nothing more than three outward manifestations of the same Deity. This he preposterously contends is the orthodox explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity, "as held by the Church of England and established by our law," and particularly by the act of the 9th and 10th of William the 3rd, "for suppressing blasphemy and profaneness." This act, which he so singularly twists to his purpose, merely enacted, "That if any person or persons should deny any one of the persons in the Holy Trinity to be God, or should assert or maintain that there was more Gods than one, such persons should incur the penalties therein mentioned." Clendon was admirably answered by Leslie, in an Appendix to his Socinian Controversy Discussed. He was of the Inner Temple, but of his life no further particulars are known.

PAGE 92. NOTE M.

As none of the Greek versions of the creed, according to Montfaucon, are ancient, (vid. Diatrib. p. 727) no very great importance need be attached to their various Lections. The Latin original seems the fittest, on all accounts, for the purposes of quotation. The latter of the two readings mentioned by Wallis appears in the various Lections collected by Gundling and Montfaucon, but the former seems certainly to agree best with the context. At present, the Greek version in use is that of Dr. Dupont.

PAGE 99. NOTE N.

See ante, p. 73, and post, p. 168, for Wallis's further remarks on Socinus's opinions as to the soul. See also Ashwell De Socino et Socinianismo, p. 187, Oxf. 1680, 12mo., and Edwards's Socinian Creed,

1697, 8vo., p. 85, for a full examination of the opinions of Socinus and his brethren, Smalcus, Slichtingius, Volkelius, and Crellius on that subject. They all seem to have held that the soul of man is not naturally immortal.

PAGE 122. NOTE O.

The Roman Catholics range the order of worship into Latria, that is due only to God; Hyperdulia, that belongs to the Blessed Virgin; and Dulia, that belongs to the other Saints.

PAGE 129. NOTE P.

Notwithstanding this caution, the whole chorus of Unitarian writers, quoting just as much of Wallis as answered their purpose, have represented him as laying down these as the adequate distinctions between the three persons, whereas he consistently and uniformly disclaims doing so. Had he denied the existence of any greater distinction than that expressed in the popular analogies he adduces, his doctrine would unquestionably have been liable to just exception, nor could his opinions on this subject have been considered as orthodox or scriptural. This, however, he has not done; and nothing can be more unjustifiable than to hold him up as limiting and restraining the characters of distinction, to those of mere outward manifestation. His description of the distinction between the Divine persons (vid. p. 209) being "somewhat analogous in the Deity to what in created beings is called *distinctio modalis*, or *distinctio a parte rei sed non ut res et res*," may be explained in some measure by the following passage in his *Logic* (edit. 1687, p. 255). "*Necessarium est de distinctionibus in genere aliquid præmittere. Distinctio igitur est vel realis vel rationis vel modalis. Realis quando extrema different ut res et res sine aliqua intrinseca dependentia unius ad aliud: unde statuuntur vulgo, per Divinam saltem potentiam posse mutuo separari et separatim existere. Modalis quando differunt quidem ex parte rei, ita tamen ut alterum includat essentialem respectum seu connexionem ad alterum: unde non possunt separatione mutuâ (hoc est ut utrumque separatim existat) separari: Estque inter rem et modum vel (secundario) inter modos ejusdem rei (modi tamen plerumque separari possunt mutuo, ab invicem, non a subjecto). Distinctio rationis quando unum aliquod a parte rei concepitur ab intellectu ut diversum. Estque vel rationis ratiocinantis vel ratiocinate: Hæc fit per inadequatos conceptus ejusdem rei et fundamentum aliquod habet in re: illa vero, quando quid intelligitur sub diversis conceptibus sine fundamento in re.*"

PAGE 173. NOTE Q.

Luther merely says, (*Postil. Ecclesias. Dominica Trinitatis*) “*Uti nec Latina quoque dictio Trinitas dulce sonat.*” The passage in Calvin is in his *Amon. ad Polonos*, and is as follows, “*Hæc precatio vulgo recepta, sancta Trinitas, unus Deus, miserere nostri non mihi placet et omnino barbariem sapit.*” Luther, it will be observed, objects to the word because he considered it sounded harshly. Calvin, because it was not recognized by the classical purity of the language. In the absence of any more valid objection, the uninterrupted use of the term by the Latin church for so many centuries, and its fitness to express, not merely the number, but also the equality and consubstantiality of the Divine persons, are quite sufficient to justify its retention in the confessions and services of the church.

PAGE 176. NOTE R.

That is, the prædicate may truly apply to the subject, without being of universal application, for “*Universalis prædicatio est quando prædicatum dicitur καθόλου de toto subjecto (totum intelligo prædicationis, sive totam ejus latitudinem et ambitum prædicandi) quando scilicet prædicatum totaliter attribuitur subjecto non partialiter cum restrictione ad aliquem subjecti partem seu ad peculiare quiddam intra subjecti ambitum comprehensum.*” Wallis, *Logica*, p. 220, edit. 1687.

PAGE 197. NOTE S.

The third letter of Lane, the author of the two letters which Wallis gave to the public, was printed separately, and is entitled, “*The Third Letter from W. J. to the Reverend Doctor Wallis, Professor of Geometry in Oxford, upon the Subject of two former Letters to him, concerning the Sacred Trinity.* London, 1693, 4to., pp. 19.” This letter is subsequently noticed by Wallis, p. 229. It contains a further exposition of the writer’s own views on the subject of the Trinity, but bears no necessary relation to Wallis’s letters. On that account, it has been deemed unnecessary to reprint it in this volume.

PAGE 231. NOTE T.

This person was the Rev. E. Elys, of whom some account may be found in Wood’s *Athenæ*, vol. II., p. 913, edit. 1721. He succeeded his father in the rectory of East Allington, in Devonshire, in 1659, but on the accession of William III. was deprived of that living in consequence of

his refusal to take the oaths. He subsequently retired to Totness, where he resided till his death. Of the innumerable small tracts and broadsides which he published, no correct list has hitherto been given, that furnished by A. Wood, even with the additions in Bliss's edition, vol. IV., p. 474, being very incomplete. Nearly all his productions are interspersed with poetry, but it cannot be said that his attempts in verse are very successful. Of his high prerogative notions, some idea may be formed from his styling Milton, in a Tract published against his *Defensio Secunda* in 1699, "*Monstrum impudentie horrendum, representans Carolum vituperando, Satanae personam, Blasphemias evomentis in Deum.*" Locke, he characterizes, in a letter to Mr. John Norris, published in 1705, "the great enemy of mankind." Samuel Parker's able *Tentamina Physico-Theologica de Deo*, he describes as "*Tenebrarum Soboles.*" Yet with all these occasional excesses of language, and the violent prejudices he entertained, he seems to have been a learned, pious, and well-intentioned man. He was a great admirer of Dr. Henry More, whose letters to himself he published in 1694, 8vo. His own letters to Dr. H. More, as well as his correspondence with Wallis on the subject of the Trinity, are in the possession of Mr. Crossley. In the latter, he speaks in the highest terms of Wallis's eight letters.

PAGE 242. NOTE U.

This piece, the full title of which is "An Earnest and Compassionate Suit for Forbearance, to the Learned Writers of some Controversies at Present. By a Melancholy Stander By. 'Knowing that they do gender strifes.' 2 Tim. ii. 23. Loud. 1691, 4to. pp. 17," was written by Dr. Edward Wetenhall, Bishop of Cork and Ross. Its object, as denoted by the title, is to recommend the discontinuance of the Trinitarian controversies, then carried on with so much warmth and vehemence. After stating Sherlock's notion of the Trinity, he proceeds (p. 15) to Wallis, and observes, "Another doctor of our church is pleased more tenderly and safely to explain it thus: The blessed Trinity is three somewhats, and these three somewhats we commonly call persons, but the true notion and true name of that distinction is unknown to us. The word persons (in Divinis) is but metaphorical, not signifying just the same as when applied to men. We mean thereby no more but somewhat analogous to persons. This latter part," Wetenhall observes, "has been ever held to by all learned Trinitarians: and the doctor speaks like himself. Yet it troubles me what sport some people make even with this explication." Sherlock replied to this tract in his *Apology* for writing against Socinians, published in 1693, 4to., in which he defends himself with great spirit and ability. This occasioned Wetenhall's *Antapology* of the Melancholy

Stander By, 1693, 4to., in answer to which Sherlock published a defence of his Apology in 1694, 4to. A reply was made to this, but evidently not by Wetenhall, in a Vindication of the Antapologist, 1695, 4to., which appears to have closed the controversy.

PAGE 244. NOTE X.

This Master of the Temple was the immortal Hooker, nor has the explanation of the Trinity contained in this passage, as I have before observed, ever been objected to by any theologian of eminence, though it is attacked in the Considerations on the Explications of the Trinity, and by later Unitarian writers.

THE END



