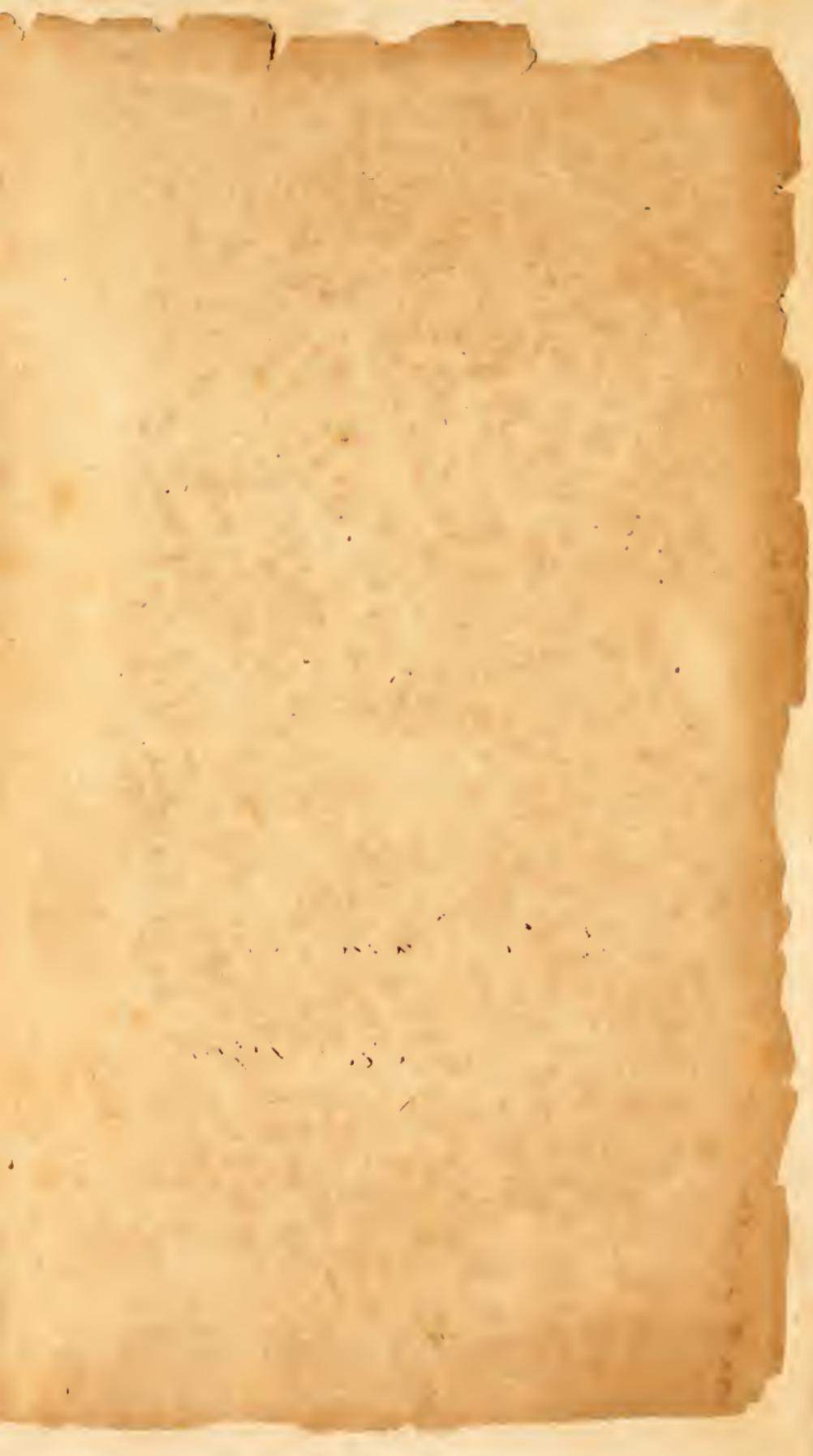


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A NEW CHAIN OF PLAIN ARGUMENT,

DEEMED

CONCLUSIVE AGAINST TRINITARIANISM.

ADDRESSED TO A

Trinitarian Writer for the Panoplist,

IN A SERIES OF

Candid Letters.

BY THOMAS WORCESTER, A. M.

PASTOR OF A CHURCH IN SALISBURY, N. H.

To us there is but one God the Father. God is one.

PAUL.

And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel ;
the Lord our God is one Lord. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master,
thou hast said the truth ; for there is one God, and there is none other but
he. Jesus said that he answered discreetly.

MARK.



BOSTON :

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1817.

A WORD TO THE PUBLIC.

If a new chain of sound conclusive argument, stated in a candid, interesting manner, be in fact contained in the following pages, then they are not unworthy of an attentive perusal, and of the most serious consideration. And who, without a patient, fair examination of the whole, can safely form an opinion of the work, contrary to the import of the title page ? It is not meant that every article in the following series of argument is perfectly new ; but, so far as the author has knowledge, there is no other publication, which bears any near resemblance to what is now before the reader.

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A New Chain of Plain Argument.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

SIR,

AS the following letters will first meet your eye from the press, you will be apprized of the subject of them as soon as you shall have read the title page. May it not then be well for you to call to mind one of the resolutions of the celebrated President Edwards, before you come to any thing of the nature of argument in what I shall offer for your consideration? "I observe," says Mr. Edwards, "that old men seldom have any advantage of new discoveries, because they are fixed in a way of thinking to which they have long been accustomed. I resolved, if ever I come to years, that I will be impartial to hear the reasons of all pretended discoveries, and receive them, if rational, how long so ever I have been used to a different way of thinking." Happy it would be for individuals; happy it would be for the church of God and for society at large, if men in every station of influence would ever act in strict conformity to the foregoing resolution. But Sir, how rarely do men act as Mr. Edwards saw that propriety and his own advantage required of him? Do you not at once perceive, that it is not a very easy thing for one in your situation to lay aside all self-interest, prejudice, and prepossessions, so as to consider duly, and weigh impartially, any arguments, which may be offered against the doctrine of the Trinity? After having taken, so deep an interest in the support of such doctrine, representing any departure from it as of the most fatal tendency, must you not have a very uncommon share of self-command to "be impartial" in respect to any reasons, which can be assigned, for not believing that there are three persons in Deity? Ought you not then to take the more pains to prepare yourself to read and consider as your own "advantage," even in this case, *may* require? For after all the assurance you have felt to the contrary, is it not, at least, *possible* that a form of words, not found in the bible, and which first came into use in a time when the minds of men were greatly heated by controversy, may at last be found without any solid foundation? And if it be *possible* that you, with great numbers of worthy men, may have mis-

judged in this case, then is it not of very considerable importance that you should put yourself fairly in the way to discover whether it be not so in fact? You will, I think, allow, that for a writer on religion, like yourself, to be in material error in respect to a point so often brought to view, and so strongly urged, must be of very evil tendency. As the work, to which you contribute, has an extensive circulation, if it be only *possible* that you have not truth on your side, in the case to which I refer, then it *may* be that the minds of many, through your instrumentality, are filled with prejudice and bitterness against many pious and able men, who are in the way to find acceptance with God in that day when "the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened." It *may* be, that your present readers will communicate like error, like prejudice, and like bitterness to vast numbers of others, and they in their turn may do the same, and so on through successive generations. It *may* be also that through your influence, many, who shall become public teachers, will be prevented from becoming in the best manner qualified to carry the gospel in its purity to Pagan nations, and especially to such Mahometans and Jews, as have insuperable objections against christianity, because its teachers have inculcated the very doctrine in question. Therefore it *may* be, that thousands and millions of lost men will, through what you have already done, be prevented from coming into the fold of Christ. If such things are merely *possible* should you not be excited to the most serious and prayerful endeavours to read with candor, and with due consideration what is now before you?

It is more than seven years since the course of providence led me to such inquiry on the subject in view, as issued in a decided conviction, that I had been educated in great error respecting the unity of God and the character of our Lord. And while it has been my perpetual aim ever since, to keep my mind open to the light, and although I have constantly endeavoured to pay due attention to every appearance of argument, which has been cast in my way, yet I am more and more confirmed in the opinion, that Trinitarianism is an error, exceedingly detrimental to christianity.

Much as I venerate the memory of many, who lived and died Trinitarians, and while I have no doubt concerning the godly sincerity of great numbers now living in the same profession, it is nevertheless evident to my mind, that it would be of unspeakable advantage to have all such triune words and forms, as are not found in the bible, entirely given up. This appears of the more importance at *this time* because such great and very commendable efforts are making to diffuse the precious light and the unspeakable blessings of christianity through the world. While my heart rejoices in the animating prospects of

the present day, it seems to me of inexpressible consequence, that the many, who shall go abroad in various directions to publish salvation, should be prepared to preach the everlasting gospel in its *primitive purity*, without carrying with them any such words of "man's wisdom" as lamentable controversy has long continued in common use. And can you, Sir, deny that this is very desirable? Yet have you not done much of a very contrary tendency? Is not the manner, in which this subject, particularly, has been treated in the Panoplist, highly calculated to make its readers think, that every gospel minister must boldly declare, that there are three coequal persons in one God, instead of teaching in the language of the first ministers of Christ that "there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"—"the only begotten Son of God" "unto whom is given the Spirit without measure" and through whom "our Father, who is in Heaven, will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Suppose, Sir, that after all you have said and done, you should, before you leave this world, see cause to give up the doctrine of the Trinity, *as the excellent Dr. Watts did, in his last days*, how must you then feel in respect to the influence such things as you have published have had? What, in that case, must be your sensation in respect to the feelings, language, and conduct you have excited against men, who will then be found to have suffered, not a little, for the truth's sake? And should such a time ever come, can it come too soon? For must you not then very earnestly wish to have an opportunity to do something towards correcting, and counteracting what will appear to have been so much amiss? Can it then be too soon for you to pay the most serious and unbiassed attention to some of the many things, which have to others appeared as weighty reasons why they should expose themselves to whatever might be the consequences in this misjudging world, rather than to appear any longer on the side of Trinitarians? Sensible that it is no less required of me to write, than of you to read, in the constant exercise of christian meekness and humility, it is my earnest desire, and prayer to God, that, whatever deficiency shall be found in any other respect, there may be no appearance in all I have to say, of any such spirit, as the most humble disciple at the feet of Jesus would deem contrary to the nature of "that wisdom, which is from above."

LETTER II.

On the want of explicit divine testimony in support of the doctrine.

SIR,

THE first thing, which I shall bring to view as a weighty consideration against the Trinitarian theory, is the want of

explicit and abundant testimony in favour of it in the sacred writings. When controversy is out of mind, is it not readily and universally admitted, that the most important articles in the system of eternal truth are most clearly and indisputably stated in the Bible ? But Sir, while you evidently consider the doctrine of three coequal persons in one God as a fundamental article of revealed religion, you have never been able to point to a single sacred text of any such *explicit* meaning. Nor can this be done by any other man living ; for it is undeniably that if the doctrine be found in the Bible at all, it is found only by way of inference, from here and there a word or sentence, or part of a sentence of ambiguous or doubtful signification. While this must be admitted as a serious fact, how is it to be accounted for, on your ground, in a satisfactory manner ? You will not say that the doctrine you contend for was not *as true* and as important from the beginning as it is now. Why then is it not clearly found in every part of the Bible ? Why is it not, by divine testimony, made as clearly and abundantly evident, that God is three persons, as it is that there is one, and but one supreme God ? Do you not suppose that all the inspired writers had as pure faith concerning the most high God as yourself ? Why then were they not as careful as you are to state the doctrine in a plain unequivocal manner ? In particular, how can you account for it that Jehovah did not, at Mount Sinai, make himself clearly known as a "triune God " When he was giving a law, which was to be a perpetual directory to mankind in respect to that worship and service, which he requires, why did he say "Thou shalt have no other gods before ME," thus using the *singular* number without any intimation that it should not be understood in *this*, as in every other case ? Does it not appear as though the nature of the case required a most explicit statement of your all important doctrine, when Jehovah was giving a law of the most universal and perpetual obligation ? And does it not seem incredible, that a God existing in three coequal persons should, on that momentous occasion, speak, as if he were in fact but one person ?

Moreover, if your doctrine be true, and as important as you suppose, why did not our Lord, who came to bear witness to the truth, state the same doctrine in words, which would need no amendment, and keep it constantly in view in all his public ministry ? At least, instead of speaking of his Father as "the only true God" and saying "the true worshippers shall worship the Father" why did he not so much as *once* on some occasion, express clearly and unequivocally what you think we should believe concerning God ? In short, does it not seem very unaccountable that neither Moses, nor any other ancient prophet, nor our Lord, nor any one of his apostles, has so much as *once* expressly stated a doctrine which, as you suppose, lies at the

very foundation of Christianity, and is of such vast importance that those who deny it, cannot be consistently treated as true worshippers of the true God?

Truly, Sir, it does not appear to me so unreasonable to think that all the great and good men, who have advocated the doctrine in view, have been under a very great mistake in this matter, as it does to suppose that there is a revealed doctrine of such a nature, and of such unspeakable importance that we might naturally expect to find it on the very face of every part of divine testimony, while in fact it is found, if found at all, only by way of inference from incidental hints, now and then given in the sacred volume. And in view of what is now before you, is there not some reason for you to apprehend, that you and many others have greatly misunderstood, and misapplied such passages of scripture as you rest upon in respect to the Trinitarian theory?

LETTER III.

On the want of any tradition among the Jews in favour of the doctrine.

Sir,

THE next thing I have to mention is, that among the Jews, who adhere to the writings of Moses and the Prophets, there is no tradition or belief in favour of the opinion, that God is three persons. You will not, I conclude, deny that the God of Abraham is the true God. I suppose you will likewise admit that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all their pious offspring through successive generations, were true worshippers of the true God. Consequently so far as I can see, you must suppose that Abraham and all his ancient believing offspring were Trinitarians, constantly worshipping "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost" as you and others do at the present time. Although you cannot find any such example of triune worship in the bible, yet as you cannot deny, that those ancient saints were true worshippers of the true God, and as you evidently hold, that what a late writer on your side has called "the solitary Deity of Unitarians,"* is not the true God, so far as I can see, it must conclusively follow that you consider the Father of the faithful, and all who walked in his steps, as having been believers in, and worshippers of a "three-one God" Yes, and to be consistent with yourself, must you not suppose, that the doctrine in question was a very material article of Abraham's creed,

* See a late able publication entitled "a candid and conciliatory review of the late correspondence of the Rev. Dr. W. with the Rev. W. E. C on the subject of Unitarianism. By a serious enquirer." Page 14. To this valuable work, written in a spirit, well worthy of imitation, the reader is referred for what is deemed a conclusive answer to some Trinitarian arguments not so much noticed in these Letters.

such as he should not fail to teach his children, in the most explicit and urgent manner, and such as his believing children could not fail to inculcate through all their generations? How then has it happened, that this doctrine is utterly unknown to the Jews of these days; except that some have knowledge of it as, in their view, a great christian error? That the Jews do now deny the doctrine, and that they have done the same for many centuries, is a fact too notorious to be denied. And is it possible for you to account for it in any rational way consistent with your own creed? If Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel and other Fathers and Teachers of the Jewish nation were in fact believers in, and worshippers of a "three-one God," why have the Jews of latter ages so universally, and so strenuously denied the same doctrine? Why have they so uniformly insisted, that no such doctrine was ever inculcated by any of their ancient Teachers, and that no such sentiment is found in any of their ancient records? If it ever was an article of faith in the Jewish Church, how did it all at once become extinct so as to be now wholly unknown to the Jews? Or if Abraham and all his believing successors had been Trinitarians like yourself, would it not have been impossible, that the knowledge of this should have been utterly lost to all the Jews from the days of the Apostles to the present time? Or is it possible that a fact so notorious, as that now in question must have been, could be denied by all that people in the various places where we have any knowledge of them?

But it is further to be considered that, as you and all Trinitarians suppose, your doctrine is found in the Old Testament, to which the Jews exclusively adhere as the rule of their faith. This Testament, which they hold very sacred, was written originally in their own language. What then can be the reason why no Old Testament Jew, has been found a believer in the doctrine for which you contend? Are not learned Jews as capable of understanding Hebrew words as yourself or any other learned man? And what peculiar temptation would any Jew be under to mislead him in respect to what the scriptures testify of Jehovah? Or if it be the true import of any word or words used in the Old Testament, that Jehovah is more than one person, what peculiar temptation can any Jew be under to deny the fact? Why then do all the Jews, so far as we have knowledge, contend so earnestly for the unity of God as one, and but one person? Is there not some reason to believe, that in this they are supported by the true meaning of their scriptures, and by the well known faith and worship of all their pious ancestors?

LETTER IV.

Containing an argument arising from the history of the fourth century.*

SIR,

PERMIT me now to call your attention to some of the information, which ecclesiastical history gives us concerning the state of things in the fourth century of the christian era. In the history of that period, as written by Trinitarians, it appears to me there is much evidence, that the doctrine in question was unknown in the christian church until some time after the commencement of the lamentable controversy between Alexander and Arius, respecting the character of our Lord. To settle the point in dispute the great council at Nice was called in the year three hundred and twenty-five. And it does not appear, that in all that numerous council, there was one man, who was then prepared to advocate, or to advance any thing like the sentiment of three coequal persons in Deity. As to the point then in dispute, a majority of the council determined against the Arians "that the Son was peculiarly of the Father, being of his substance, as begotten of him."* Further than this, it seems that council was not prepared to go. And how is this to be accounted for? For do you not suppose, that all the apostles of our Lord, and all the elders, by them ordained in every church, were like those, who at this day say, "We worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?" Do you not suppose that none of those first ministers of the New Testament could fail of inculcating such doctrine and worship in the most urgent manner? How then could it so soon come to pass, that in a council, containing several hundreds of bishops and presbyters, there was not one man ready to appear in character as a Trinitarian? As we can now look back several centuries and say with confidence, that Calvin and others of his time were Trinitarians, likewise, if it had been a reality that the apostles had explicitly taught and worshipped as Trinitarians do now, must it not have been known to the members of the Nicene council? And in that case would they have stopped so much short of what was done by another council more than fifty years later? Besides, have you not seen in the light of history, that the opinions of Athanasius were at first, and for a considerable time, withheld as great and dangerous innovations by the general voice of those, who were set for the defence of the gospel? Have you not seen that after Athanasius had been twice deposed for his errors and his vices, by large councils, one in Tyre and the other at Antioch, he appealed to the aspiring bishop of Rome, who on being thus flattered, called such a select council,

* Mil. Chh. Hist. Vol. II. p. 70.

as set up the doctrine of Athanasius, and at the same time acknowledged the bishop of Rome, as one having authority to receive appeals from every part of the christian world!! And have you not seen, that when the Trinitarian cause and the popish interest had become thus united, it became more and more unpopular and unsafe for any one to appear in opposition to the Athanasian innovations, in proportion as the bishop, or pope of Rome advanced in power and influence ?* Yet have you not seen that many of the clergy continued to raise their voices against what they considered great error, and that many large councils condemned the opinions of Athanasius as without any scripture

* See a work worthy of the most careful attention, entitled "An attempt to explain the words *reason, person, substance, &c.* by a presbyter of the church of England." The following quotation, ending at the 49th page, is verbatim. "Athanasius now finding his case hopeless, deprived of his bisheprie, and another in possession of it, formed a most desperate resolution, unworthy of a christian bishop, and which hath had the most fatal consequences. He appealed from the council of Antioch and the emperor to Julius, bishop of Rome—fled to that city and put himself under the protection of that prelate. Julius himself, delighted with this event, as it was an acknowledgement that his jurisdiction is above all others, most gladly received him and his appeal. And this laid the foundation of the papal supremacy, upon which hath been built such a superstructure of dominion, of doctrine and worship, as hath astonished the world ever since. Now Athanasius was highly caressed and dignified with the title of saint. His opinions must be defended to give the better pretext for defending his person." The following gloomy account is extracted from the same author, beginning at the 84th page. "In the year 367 Liberius, bishop of Rome, died. He had in the former part of his time, imitated his predecessor Julius in supporting Athanasius and his tenets: but at last he beeane one of those who subcribed his condemnation. There was one Damasus, a clergyman of Rome, whom Liberius had made his vicar, and given him several preferments. Upon the death of Liberius, Damasus and Ursicinus, another of the Roman presbyters, were competitors for the succession; and they were both chosen bishop of Rome by their different parties. This occasioned dreadful tumults. (Damasus in one of these, at the head of his partizans, beset the church of Liberius, where were many of Ursicinus' party assembled; set fire to it and burned and killed an hundred and sixty persons) Each supported his claim by violence and force. But Damasus was either the most powerful or the most cunning; for after much blood had been shed, Ursicinus and his party were driven out of the city. When Damasus was thus left in possession of his dignity, he called a council at Rome, and the first thing he did in it, was to have his predecessor and benefactor, in all probability then in heaven, censured and condemned as a heretic for acting against the saint Athanasius. Damasus was too sagacious not to perceive, that the grandeur of himself and his see depended upon his supporting the man, who had done more to aggrandize the bishoprie of Rome than any person before had attempted; and therefore he strictly united himself to Athanasius. And no two were ever more like one another. Both were guilty of the most turbulent and violent actions; both were publicly accused of the grossest crimes. Both supported their titles to their bishopries, against their competitors, by the most outrageous tumults, massacres, and murders. Both of them were unnoticed for any good actions in their lives, unless their furious zeal against their fellow christians whom they called heretics may be so calld. Both of them were dignified with the title of SAINT—for doing the greatest prejudice to christianity. And both of them now united in the support of Homoousian doctrine, and all the consequences which Athanasius and his adherents had drawn from it. Now the grand struggle was between the Athanasians and Arians known under various names.—After the Nicene council, when the contending parties had worn themselves out in the most refined disputes concerning the divinity of the Son of God, they then began to argue concerning that of the Holy Ghost."

foundation? But you will say, a very great council at Constantinople, which continued three years, beginning A. D. 381, approved and established the doctrine of Athanasius as orthodox. Yes, Sir, as Dr. Mosheim says, "An hundred and fifty bishops, who were present at this council, gave the finishing touch to what the council of Nice had left imperfect, and fixed in a full and determinate manner the doctrine of three persons in one God,"* Mr. Milner also says "This council very accurately defined the doctrine of the Trinity." Yet with all his Trinitarian zeal, Mr. Milner is constrained to say of the same council, "It was very confused and disorderly, greatly inferior in piety and wisdom to that of Nice.—Faction was high and charity was low at this time."† Thus does the most zealous Trinitarian historian speak of that council, which, as he thinks, "very accurately defined the doctrine of the Trinity." But, Sir, if this council had been equal "in piety and wisdom to the council of Nice," is it certain that "the doctrine of three persons in one God" would have been "fixed in a full and determinate manner," as it was at that time? It was now more than fifty years since the commencement of the deplorable controversy respecting the character of Christ. In all this time there was, as you will not deny, a rapid decline of pure and undefiled religion; and a very great increase of such error, pride and arrogance, as brought on the long and dreadful night of popish darkness! And no man, well acquainted with the history of the church during that period, can deny, that the progress of Athanasian Trinitarianism was, in a great degree, proportionate to the decline of godliness, and to the rise of "the man of sin." As the

* Ecc. Hist. Vol. I. p. 146.

† Ch. Hist. Vol. II. p. 184. The same author, from whose work the foregoing long note was taken, speaking of the council of Constantinople, says, "Theodosius continued the council three years. Nectarius presided the second year in the synod, to which they invited Nazianzen, whom they had deposed the year before. But he refused to go to this or any other synodical assembly, and told them in his letter, that 'experience had taught him how little good was to be expected from synods, which usually more widen than heal up differences; where generally they clash and quarrel, wrangle and make a noise, more like a flock of geese and cranes, than an assembly of grave and wise prelates. At such meetings, he says, strife and contention, pride and ambition, commonly bear the greatest sway; and the man who goes there as judge, should sooner corrupt himself than correct and reform others—that for these reasons he had retired within himself, and thought the only means of security was to live in privacy and solitude.' The next year, 383, Theodosius resolving to have a creed made that all should comply with, did what he could to mollify and sweeten the several parties. He received them all with the fondest caresses, conniving at the exercise of their several worships. But the Athanasian bishops were greatly offended at this toleration, and insisted that the Arians might be suppressed and banished the city. This the emperor found himself obliged to comply with.—Now it was that the Athanasians, finding themselves more numerous than their opposers, set themselves to form a new creed: And out of the old forms of Jerusalem and Nice, they made another at Constantinople, which is the very creed we have in our liturgy, one article only excepted, concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit." p. 92.

minds of the clergy and others became more and more "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ," they became more and more ready to sanction, or at least to tolerate the triune "words of man's wisdom," used in articles of faith and in forms of worship.

It should however be noted, that even in the council of Constantinople, there was a large minority of dissenters, and that great numbers, about that time and afterwards, exposed themselves to the most violent persecutions, by refusing to subscribe the triune article of faith, and by bearing testimony against such doctrine and worship.

Now Sir, in view of these things, is it possible for you to think that the doctrine, about which there was so much contention, was no innovation? At a time so near the apostolic age, was it possible, that there could be among christians very violent contention of long continuance, in respect to any material point, which the first christians at large had received from the apostles of our Lord? Can you believe, that all, who attended on the ministry of the apostles, heard them teach as Trinitarians now teach, and heard them worship as Trinitarians now worship, and yet believe that the self same doctrine and manner of worship, excited very general alarm, and occasioned very warm contention throughout the christian world, within less than three hundred years after the ministry of the apostles was ended? Or, in other words, is it not made clearly evident to your own mind, that, as to the great point in question, the inspired apostles and primitive christians did not teach and worship as Trinitarians do at this day? In short, as to this serious fact, we have the explicit testimony both of Mr. Milner and Dr. Mosheim against you. The former says expressly, that "Flavian" of the fourth century "was the first who *invented* the doxology, "Glory be to the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost." And the other historian says, "In earlier periods of the church the worship of Christians was confined to the one supreme God and his Son Jesus Christ."*

P. S. In connexion with the argument contained in the foregoing letter, it ought to be considered that the doctrine in question cannot, with any propriety, be viewed as a doctrine of the reformation. Often and confidently as it has been thus called, who can assign any good reason for it? For who does not know that the triune article of faith as "fixed" by the "confused and disorderly" council of Constantinople, has ever since been deemed a cardinal point in the creed of the church of Rome? What then was done by Luther and his coadjutors in regard to this matter? Certainly they did not originate an article of faith which had existed nearly a thousand years before their time;

* Ch. Hist. Vol. II. p. 93. Ecc. Hist. Vol. II. p. 176.

nor did they revive the use of that article, for the use of it never had been discontinued. Therefore it is only true, that the reformers had no contention with the church of Rome on this particular point. As they had been Trinitarians while of that church, so they continued to be when Protestants. Nor is it at all strange that they did not perceive at once, and in every particular, how far the papal church had wandered from the way of truth. It is rather wonderful that they, in so short a time, effected so much as they did by way of reformation. But if I do not mistake, it is somewhere said of the mild Melancthon, that he perceived in the triune article of faith so much departure from the simplicity of divine testimony, that he wept in view of the controversy it must at some time occasion among the Protestants.

LETTER V.

Containing an argument, grounded on the fact, that many have not been able to find the doctrine in the bible.

Sir,

I WOULD now lead you to consider, that although for many centuries all have been under strong inducements to receive the doctrine in question, yet there ever have been many, who have not been able to find it in the bible. You, Sir, have too much information to deny, that very powerful secular inducements have long been on the side of Trinitarians, nearly all over the christian world. Even since the days of more violent persecution were ended, men of any distinction have had much to forego, and not a little to suffer, if they could not be, or at least *profess to be*, Trinitarians. Without such profession, in what christian kingdom have men stood fair for any considerable promotion, either in church or state? Besides, who would not wish to avoid such censures, privations, reproaches, abuses and anathemas, as have constantly fallen on men of any note, who could not do otherwise than dissent from the triune faith? Truly, Sir, in view of these things, and considering what human nature is, and how much there is of imperfection even in good men, it is easy to see why Trinitarianism is so generally professed, whether there be in fact much, or little, or nothing in the bible to support it or not. You know Sir, how natural it is for men, who are educated Mahometans to continue in that faith; and how natural it is for those, who are educated in the church of Rome, to continue in the errors of that church. You likewise know, how natural it is for those, who were educated in the church of England faith, to adhere to the articles and forms of episcopacy. Besides, you are not ignorant of the fact, that the more any sect of christians become interested in the support of any particular sentiment, the more easy it is for them to construe much of divine testimony in favour of that senti-

ment, even when in fact there is not in the whole bible an iota of solid foundation, on which they can rest. And can you do otherwise than admit that there is no one sentiment, in the support of which any sect of christians are more interested than Trinitarians are in the support of the doctrine now in view? Is it not then very possible, that after all they have said and done, it may be found that there is not a single text in the bible *really* on their side? But while it is so easy to account for the long and general prevalence of Trinitarianism, whether it has *really* any scripture foundation or not, how are we to account for the dissent of not a very few in every age? When it has been, in every considerable part, and in almost every corner of christendom, so much for the interest of all men to subscribe to the triune article of faith, why have considerable numbers chosen rather to expose themselves to censure, reproach, and no inconsiderable privations, by a different profession? Would they have done this if they could have found satisfactory evidence of the truth of such doctrine? And when there was so much to induce them to it, why could they not find such evidence in the bible, if it can be truly found there? I am aware that you have an answer ready, but I can hardly think it is such as can well satisfy your own mind. In such things as you publish, and in other publications on your side, it is often insinuated very strongly, that those, who reject the doctrine of the Trinity, do this, not because they do not find *bible* evidence in support of the doctrine, but "because it transcends the limited faculties of the human mind." But, Sir, to say nothing of the uncharitable nature of this insinuation, is it in human nature to forego all the secular advantages on the side of Trinitarianism merely to avoid a profession of faith in a mysterious proposition, when the same is well supported by divine testimony? You cannot be insensible, that many reputed Trinitarians have found various ways of explaining the triune form of words in a manner, which involves no mystery. And is there not much reason to believe, that a great proportion of those, who have passed for Trinitarians, have used the common words and forms of the same denomination, without any such meaning as "transcends the limited faculties of the human mind?" Or, in other words, have not many, very many, avoided the charge of heresy by professing to believe, that there are three persons in one God, meaning only that one God acts in three offices, or by explaining the words three persons in some other way no more mysterious? And if any class, or classes of men have scorned to avoid the charge of heresy by any such device, are they not rather to be praised than condemned for so doing? And would it be any stretch of candour for you to allow, that men of integrity enough to resist all the temptations to follow a multitude in some such course, would acknowledge the fact, if they could find the doctrine in question in the bible?

Now, Sir, let me intreat you to call to mind that considerable numbers in every age have not been Trinitarians. Think of the great numbers, who steadily resisted all the efforts of Athanasius and his adherents to establish his doctrine. Think of the many, who manfully stood out, even after a great council, by a majority of votes, had decided in favour of the doctrine, and after it was sanctioned by the plenitude of popish authority. Think of the numerous Waldenses and Albigenses, who, through the darkest ages, distinguished themselves by their purity in doctrine and life ; and of whom Trinitarian writers allow, that many of them, at least, were not Trinitarians. Think of the various classes among Protestants, who have, in many instances, to their great secular disadvantage, avowed antitrinitarian sentiments. And think moreover of the great proportion of *reputed* Trinitarians, who have not been able to find any *real* Trinitarianism in the bible. Think, I entreat you, on these things, and inquire seriously, whether there be not at least some probability that the strong inducements, you have been under to keep on the popular side, may have caused you to mistake the true meaning of divine testimony ?

An aged person of good understanding, of early undoubted piety, and of much acquaintance with the scriptures, once said, in my hearing, " Until I lately read such a book, I never had a thought that any person in the world ever believed that Jesus Christ was the self-existent God. Certainly the bible never conveyed any such idea to my mind." " This is but one of many similar declarations, which have led me to think that the number of real Trinitarians among the common people is very small. Although they so generally consent to the use of triune words and forms of worship, yet, as I believe, they generally have no clear idea of what you and others mean by such words and forms ; but use them, supposing that learned and good men can see why they should be used, while at the same time they as much believe that the one supreme God is one being, and his son Jesus Christ another, as they believe the same in respect to any other father and son. That this is true of a considerable number of persons, brought up in several Trinitarian societies, I have the most positive evidence. And I can see no reason why it is not as likely to be so with people generally through the christian world, as with those with whom I have had conversation. But whether I am correct in supposing the number of such people to be so very large or not, still in the known fact there seems to be much weight of argument against your theory. If a person of good understanding, and of genuine piety, although educated as a Trinitarian, may carefully read the bible from youth to old age, without having a thought, that Jesus Christ is the supreme God, then must there not be, to say the least, a great deficiency of scripture evidence in support of the

doctrine, which you hold? And in view of many such facts as I have stated, does it not appear as hard for you and others to require a belief in your doctrine as a term of christian fellowship, as it was for Pharaoh to require of the Israelites brick without straw?

LETTER VI.

Containing an argument grounded on the fact that many, who had been educated Trinitarians, have changed sides.

SIR,

Another thing I would lead you to consider is, that not a very few, who had been educated Trinitarians, have, after a thorough examination of the subject, taken other ground. Much as there ever has been to induce all of such education to continue on the popular side, yet, at different times, and in several parts of the christian world, no inconsiderable numbers, have had resolution to make such inquiry, as issued in a decided change of sentiment. How is this to be well accounted for, if your doctrine is well founded? That hundreds and thousands, and tens of thousands, even of able, learned, and good men, should keep along as they were taught from their youth, under such secular advantages, as have perpetually remained on one side, is by no means unaccountable, however erroneous the theory in question may be. You will, I think, allow, that on supposition Trinitarians are really in the wrong, it is as easy to see why so many continue in this error, as it is to see why such numbers continue in other great errors of the church of Rome. But that one man after another, in so many instances as have occurred, should voluntarily set himself up as a mark and a by-word, and subject himself to various privations and sufferings by declaring his conviction of past error, is, I think, not easily reconcileable with the supposition, that the bible contains a solid foundation for your theory. Can you do otherwise than allow, that one such an instance furnishes more weight of argument against you, than the continuance of thousands on the side where supposed truth and secular ease and interest are all united? But we have known more than one such instance. Yes, and we have knowledge of such a change in a considerable number, who had been men of reputation for piety, orthodoxy, discernment, and information; and against whom nothing can be truly said now, except that they have had the resolution to inquire for themselves, and the honesty and independence to avow their change of opinion on the point in question, and to act accordingly. And permit me, Sir, to add, that, as I believe, all these men would affirm, as in the presence of Jehovah, that they did not give up the triune doctrine "because it transcends the limited faculties of the human mind;" but because on examination, they found not only a great want of plain divine warrant in support of it, but also found such ex-

plicit, positive, and abundant divine testimony against it, that if they had not once been Trinitarians themselves, they could hardly believe that any man, with the bible in his hands, could be honest in a profession of such faith. Would you ask, why they did not discover all this before? My answer is, they went on in the common track, without any thorough examination in respect to the matter, until in some way they were roused to more faithful inquiry. Would you ask whether I suppose, that thorough inquiry on this point has never been made by any, who have continued to be Trinitarians? Although it may at first seem uncandid I must answer, yes: It is Sir, my decided opinion that every man, who ever did make thorough inquiry, with his mind open to the light of truth, has been convinced that Trinitarianism is of human device. I have no doubt that you, and many others, have spent considerable time, endeavouring to find evidence in favour of what you and they believed, and wished still to believe. But I do not think that you, or any other man, who is now on your side, ever rose above all prepossession, prejudice, and self-interest, feeling as willing to find truth on the unpopular side as on the other, and then weighed every argument, which could be found both for and against what you believe, by the most patient and fair comparison of scripture with scripture, and making all divine testimony in most perfect agreement with itself, the test of truth. It is, Sir, my settled opinion, that a great mistake in respect to what you and others on your side have done, by way of inquiry in this matter, goes far to support your doctrine in the minds of men. I have no doubt that many of your readers suppose, that you have paid much attention to the subject in a candid and impartial manner. But, Sir, permit me to ask, is it not a fact, that with all your ability and study, you have greater reliance on the examination, which you suppose others on your side have made, than you have on your own research as to the particular point now in view? I ask this question with a desire to lead you and others to useful reflection; because I verily think that some suppose you have done much more by way of critical and impartial inquiry than is a matter of fact, and that you are under the same mistake as to what others before you, and others of the present day have done. If all such mistakes were well rectified, then it might be hoped, that you and other Trinitarians would set about such inquiry, as I believe never yet failed to end in a conviction, that the most high God is one, and but one person. But so long as you shall feel confident, that many great and good men have done by way of inquiry what in fact they never did; and so long as many in like manner shall rely on yourself, and on other writers, no less deficient, it will seem needless, as it is very often expressed, "to go over all the ground again."

LETTER VII.

Containing arguments, resulting from the various definitions given by Trinitarians, and from their manner of treating opponents.

SIR,

ANOTHER thing, which seems to me worthy of your very serious consideration, is the great diversity in the explanations of those, who have passed for Trinitarians. If the doctrine, for which you so earnestly contend, be true, it certainly is true in some definite sense. And one would suppose, *that* sense would be easily found the scriptures, if there be any such thing as revelation concerning the matter. How then has it happened, that so many, and such diverse opinions have been given as to the meaning of the words *three persons in one God*? Why has one class of Trinitarians believed, that there are three agents, each possessed of all divine perfections; another, that one being acts in three different offices; another, that three principal attributes of Deity are personified; another, that the three persons designate three positions of the same Divine Being; another, that there are "*three somewhats*" or "*three somethings*" in the one God; and another, that it is proper to use the triune phraseology without any given sense, it being, in their view, irreverent, if not impious, to attempt, or even to inquire after any definition or explanation? These, Sir, are but a part of the many ways, in which different classes of Trinitarians have endeavoured to justify their use of triune language, in the most solemn transactions and acts of religious worship. Is there not, then, much reason to doubt, whether there be in the bible any real foundation for any use of the common Trinitarian forms?

But another thing of still more importance to be considered, is the manner, in which you, and others on your side, have treated conscientious dissenters from your doctrine. Is it not, in the view of wise observers, characteristic of the most erroneous sectarians, to rely on a certain round of specious arguments, regardless of whatever is said to shew their fallacy, and never fairly meeting the arguments, which support the truth against them? On the other hand, is it not characteristic of those, who have the truth on their side, to give strong reasons for their opinions, at the same time pointing out the fallacy of the most specious arguments, which are urged in support of error? Now, Sir, have not very strong scripture reasons been given in support of opinions contrary to yours, and has it not been fairly shewn, that there is material defect in all the arguments, on which you and other Trinitarians rely? But where is the manly attempt to point out any fallacy in the main arguments, urged in support of opinions contrary to yours? Or where is the manly reply to what has been said to point out the

fallacy of Trinitarian arguments? Where is any thing, which has been directed against your opponents in any other manner than in that which is characteristic of a bad 'cause? If you really have the truth on your side, then certainly it may be clearly shewn, that there is material defect in the main arguments urged in support of contrary opinions; and if it can be made to appear, that your arguments are not so defective as they have been represented, why has this been omitted? Why have you and others continued to repeat arguments, the supposed fallacy of which has been often pointed out, without taking any notice of what has been said to show their defect? And instead of doing, as you have done, in respect to opinions contrary to your own, why have you not fairly met the arguments urged in support of such opinions, clearly exposing such defects, as ever can be found in arguments used to support error?

After I had become seriously apprehensive, that the doctrine of the Trinity was not founded in truth, instead of making any secret of such apprehensions, I conversed in the most frank and open manner with brethren in the ministry, as often as I had favourable opportunity, earnestly desiring them to point out any, and all supposed deficiency in my arguments. In like manner, I also wrote to a large number of my ministerial acquaintance, laying myself entirely open, and expressing the most sincere and earnest desire that those, to whom I wrote, would not fail to shew me, if it were possible, wherein I misunderstood and misapplied scripture, and wherein there was any other defect in such arguments, as to me appeared invincible. But no such help have I ever obtained. Ready as many have been to unite in the cry of heresy against me, not one man has ever attempted, in any conversation, or in any letter, to point out a single defect in any argument urged by me, either against your theory, or in support of my own. What, Sir, is the most natural inference from all this? If truth is on your side, what has prevented such an exposure of the fallacy of my reasonings, as, in that case, brotherly faithfulness must have required? Is it not at least very natural for me to suppose, that ministers and others, with whom I have conversed, and to whom I have written, would gladly have pointed out any material defect in my arguments, if it had been in their power? And if this were not in their power, have I not strong reason to believe, that I have truth on my side? And what, Sir, is the fair inference from the manner, in which you and others have treated the author of "Bible News," and his writings? After all your allusions to that author, and all your pointed insinuations against what he has published, in what page of the Panoplist shall be found a fair, candid refutation of his theory, or of a single argument he has used? If it has not been in your power to set aside his theory by a fair exhibition of divine testimony, why have you said so much to excite alarm, and to fill

your readers with prejudice against his writings? And if it has been in your power to make it clearly evident, that his theory is not founded in truth, why have you not done this, in a manly christian manner, instead of publishing such insinuations, invectives, and aspersions, as have appeared in several numbers of that work? In like manner there is room to query in respect to all, that others have written against "Bible News." Much as you have praised some things published against it, yet among all the pamphlets it has occasioned, who can name one, in which any writer has fairly met, and refuted a single proposition, or a single argument of the so much reprobated work? As it was easy for Thomas Paine to say many things against the bible, while it was not in his power to invalidate the arguments, which prove that the scriptures were written by inspiration of God; so it is easy for men to find something to say against every thing, which has been or can be written on the side of truth; while at the same time nothing can be done to overthrow any sound principle, or to invalidate any sound argument in the view of men given to thorough investigation. And when men of ability and information indulge themselves in declamation, invective and reviling, against any opponent; especially when they do this without any attempt to detect him in any false reasoning, is it not to be inferred, that his arguments are too too sound to be answered in any fair and conclusive manner? Now, Sir, in respect to the author before mentioned, who has attempted to point out any sophistry, or any perversion of divine testimony, or any unnatural inference from his premises, in what he has published on the subject, to which I refer? Do not all the arguments found in his "Bible News," all which are found in his "Address to the Trinitarian Clergy," and all which are found in the several numbers of his "Appeal to the Candid," remain as much unanswered, as the best arguments, which have been stated to prove the divine authority of the holy scriptures? In short, is not all, that you and others have printed against that author, more favourable to the conclusion, that his theory is correct, and that his arguments are sound, than of the contrary? For if you, or any other writer against him, had been able to make it appear, that his views are inconsistent with the tenor of scripture, how gladly would it have been done, even to the ruin of his reputation, and that of all, who favour his sentiments.

In this connexion I am constrained to ask, how it can be reasonable, or how it can be safe, for you to represent, that men, against whom nothing else can be said, are in the way to final perdition, merely because they have given up the doctrine of three persons in one God, when for so doing they have given such weighty scripture reasons, as no man has yet been able to answer; and when the views, which they now entertain, are such as they can in the clearest manner express in the very language

of divine testimony, used in the most perfect agreement with the tenor of scripture?

I have further to ask, how it can be to the credit of Trinitarianism, that it has been so long and so much supported by terrific denunciations against all, who do not continue to hold it fast? It cannot be denied, that for a long time the state of things in every considerable part of christendom has been such; that there has been much to deter men from free, impartial inquiry on this subject, and from any other than the common profession on this article. If it had been otherwise, is there not much reason to believe that the Trinitarian doctrine would have been generally given up long ago? But, to say nothing more of former periods and other parts of the world, suppose, Sir, that ever since "Bible News" was published, there had been nothing in any part of this country to make any man afraid to inquire, and speak his mind; and suppose, that the general voice, and the general conduct of the clergy had been of a nature to encourage every one to read, and examine, and to avow his sentiments without fear or restraint, is there not much reason to think, that, by this time, the apparent number on your side would have been far less than it is now? If you will not allow this, or if you will not admit that a fear of censure and reproach has any influence in the support of your doctrine in question, then why will not you and all other Trinitarians agree to make a fair experiment in regard to this matter? That is, why will you not all agree to lay aside all "bitterness, and wrath, and evil speaking," in respect to any, who differ from you? Why will you not agree to treat all as good men, who, in other respects, appear to be such, whatever they may believe as to the point in question? Why will you not likewise agree to require of candidates for the ministry, no more by way of confession of faith, than was required in the days of the apostles, and long afterwards.* Why will you not, in short, all agree to

* "What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?" But while Trinitarians make it a rule to license no man for the ministry without a confession that God is three persons, are they not very likely to save "chaff" and lose "wheat?" For is it not a very easy thing for the most unworthy candidate to be prepared with such words as he well knows will be required? And who but a man of integrity and uprightness is likely to hesitate about using such popular words, as are made indispensable, and yet understood very differently, *so far as they are understood at all?* Besides, who can help seeing that it is next to impossible for young men, who are determined to be ministers, to make any *impartial* inquiry in respect to any article of faith, which they know they *must* consent to, or fail of their object? And of what real value is any confession of faith which is not the fruit of thorough investigation, or of free impartial inquiry? Is it not mere "chaff?"

Not long ago, a certain association refused to license a very worthy, pious, well informed young man, *merely* because he could not, with a good conscience, say he believed, that God exists in three coequal persons. Soon after, the same association licensed another man, who must have been considered in every other respect *far inferior* to the other; but "he could frame to pronounce" the "Shibboleth" which was required. Another, as I trust, well disposed young man, had,

such a course of conduct in all respects, as shall encourage all men to the most free and impartial inquiry on the subject, and to the most frank and open avowal of whatever they shall see cause to believe? If all this should be done for any considerable time, and Trinitarianism should still prevail as much as ever, such prevalence would certainly be far more to the credit of the doctrine than what we now witness. And can you, Sir, give any good reason why such an experiment as I have proposed, should not be made? Is not gospel truth of a nature to support itself without the aid of carnal weapons or human devices? And have not you and others already gone much too far by way of condemning some, of whom Jesus *may* not be ashamed, when we shall stand before his judgment seat? Did he not, when setting "an example that we should follow his steps," manifest such a spirit of forbearance, tenderness, and love towards such, as were by him *known to be* in great error, as you and others have not manifested towards some, whom you only *imagine to be* in great error? Have not Hopkinsian Trinitarians already felt, in some degree, what it is to have their own measure meted to them again?* And how long shall such retribution go the round among christians, ere we all learn, that no error in sentiment, of whatever magnitude, is such a transgression of the law of Christ, as a want of love towards any man, in whom is found any measure of his spirit?

LETTER VIII.

Containing an argument drawn from the recorded worship of the ancient people of God.

SIR,

ANOTHER thing, which appears to me worthy of your very serious consideration is, that all the ancient people of God appear to have worshipped him *invariably* as one, and but one person. We have, both in the old, and in the New Testament, many specimens of the manner, in which the people of God worshipped him; but among them, all there is not one example for triune worship. This, I believe, has been explicitly or implicitly acknowledged by all, who have written on your side. No such writer has, to my knowledge, produced an instance, which

for a considerable time, dissented from the triune doctrine; but while he was preparing for the ministry, finding it necessary in order to get along according to his wishes, he all at once appeared to have found some way to use the Trinitarian phraseology, so as to have it pass. Accordingly he obtained license, and not long after was ordained. At the time of his ordination, as I have been very credibly informed, he doubted whether there be *properly* three persons, but said "there are three somethings in the one God! !!" May it not with great truth be said, "Brethren, these things ought not so to be?"

* This query has reference to what has been done in New York.

he would venture to call worship in a triune form; but how gladly would this have been done, if it had been possible. I am not however insensible, that it has been represented, that we have authority for triune worship in the baptizing commission given by our Lord to his disciples. But why it should be considered as an act of worship to baptize as Jesus has commanded, I know not. As far as I can see, it would be quite as correct to speak of the proper use of the words "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," in any other case as an act of worship. But be this as it may, it remains true, that there is no example for triune worship in the bible, for no man will say, that it was an act of worship for our Lord to speak to his apostles, saying, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" and it cannot be shewn, that the apostles or any other servant of Christ, mentioned in the New Testament, ever used these same words in the act of baptizing. I would not, however, be understood to call in question the propriety of such use of the words. But, however proper this may be, yet seeing there is no example of it in the New Testament, it betrays the weakness of your cause to quote the words in view, as scripture authority for triune worship. And however it may be contended, that baptizing is an act of worship, there is certainly no explicit warrant for any man to address the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as one God, in any act of worship. Neither is there, to my knowledge, an iota of divine warrant to worship the Lord Jesus in any other character than that of "the king of the Jews," "the Son of God," "the first begotten," "the Lamb," and our "Lord to the glory of God the Father." It seems never to have been duly considered by Trinitarians, that it is nothing to your purpose to prove, that Christ has been, and should be worshipped, unless it can be proved, that he has been and should be worshipped, as the supreme God. That we have scripture authority for worshipping him in *some sense* is not denied. Neither can it be denied, that the scriptures speak of worship of some sort, paid to other persons besides God and his beloved Son. Certainly you will not deny that on a time the assembled Israelites "bowed their heads and worshipped God, and the king." And it is as certain, that you cannot rationally infer from the worship paid to that temporal king of Israel, that he was the Most High God. By what authority then can you infer from any worship paid to Christ that he is the supreme God? Surely it ought to be proved, as it never yet has been, that, in some instance of the worship mentioned in scripture, it was indisputably worship paid to our Lord as the supreme Jehovah, before the circumstance of his being worshipped is any more urged as evidence of his supreme divinity.

In short, Sir, as to the Son and the Holy Spirit, what precept or example can you produce, which will support you in that kind of worship, in which a writer on your side seems to glory, when to a Unitarian he says "We worship, Sir, THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY GHOST? Do you worship this same God?"* Did any of the ancient Patriarchs "worship this same God?" Did Moses or Joshua, or Samuel, or David or Solomon "worship this same God?" Did any of the prophets, or John the baptist, or Jesus of Nazareth, or any of his apostles "worship this same God?" Were the apostles and others taught to "worship this same God" when our Lord said "After this manner pray ye, *Our Father who art in Heaven,*" &c.? Or is such worship justified by these words of the Saviour, "*The true worshippers shall worship the Father?*" Is it not rather presumptuous for any man to add the Son and the Holy Spirit to make out an object of "*true*" supreme worship? Is not this being wise above *what is* written? And may it not be well for you, and other Trinitarians to pause and consider seriously, whether such worship, as has not a single scripture precept or example for its support, does not render you very liable to the solemn interrogation, "*Who hath required this at your hands?*"

LETTER IX.

On the explicit and abundant testimony that God is one person.

SIR,

I WOULD next lead you to consider what appears to me to be explicit and abundant divine testimony that God is but one person. It is plainly written in the scriptures of truth "To us there is BUT ONE GOD THE FATHER." "A mediator is not a mediator of one, but GOD IS ONE," "the holy ONE," "the high and lofty ONE." Such is the explicit language of divine testimony. Accordingly in all, that is addressed to Jehovah through the whole bible, he is addressed as one and but one person. Also in all that is said of him, he is spoken of as one and but one person. Likewise in every thing he has himself said, he has spoken as one and but one person. For although he has in a very few instances used the plural number, yet in every such instance has he not spoken as one person in company with another, and not in one instance as though two or more persons were speaking at the same time? Instead of *we will make man*, the manner is "*Let us make man.*" And is it not in this manner in every instance, in which God is represented, as using the plural number when speaking of himself? And how can it be difficult for any man to account for such use of the plural num-

* See the Review before quoted, p. 4.

her without supposing, that God is more than one person, when it is certainly no uncommon thing for one person to speak after the same manner, when no other person unites in what is said? Of this are there not frequent instances in the sacred pages, as in other writings? Besides, as the WORD, the only begotten of the Father, was with him in the beginning, and as "without him there was not any thing made," is it not very natural to suppose that Jehovah spake to his Son in all the instances to which reference is now made?

But if it be admitted, that such a manner of speaking would have been proof of a plurality of persons in the Deity; if the same had been common through the bible, what then is the overbalancing amount of evidence, that God is but one person, arising from the use of the singular number by, and of, and to God, in the proportion of more than a thousand instances to one? In short, Sir, supposing it to be a fact that God is but one person, how could this have been made, by divine testimony, more evident than it is made; except that it might have been expressly affirmed that God is *not* three persons? And why would not this have been just as superfluous as it would be for me to tell my readers, that I am not three persons?

LETTER X.

On the want of any good reason, why three divine persons should speak and be addressed in the singular number.

SIR,

IT appears essential to the Trinitarian theory, that there should be some good reason, why three divine persons should invariably speak, be spoken to, and spoken of in the bible, as but one person would speak, &c.; but to me it appears, that no such reason has been or can be given. As in the scriptures there is so much said by, and to, and of Jehovah, and all exactly in such language as must have been used, on the supposition that God is but one person, unless some good reason can be assigned, shewing why three divine persons should address others, and be themselves addressed, as but one person, your theory in question must, it should seem, fall to the ground. What then is the great reason assigned for such a departure from the invariable use and signification of words in every other case? All the reason, which has been, or can be given is, that the three supposed divine persons are one, and but one God. But, Sir, as currently as this reason has passed for a long time, it appears to me utterly unavailing. For there is no other known case, in which a plurality of persons, however united, speak as but one. It is, therefore, contrary to all analogy, and contrary to all custom and all rule, as to the use of words in every lan-

guage, to suppose that a God, existing in three persons, should speak and be addressed in the singular number. By saying there is but *one God*, you assign no reason why *three persons* should speak as but *one person*. You say, "God is one in essence." Be it so; yet you say, this same God is *three persons*. Certainly, then, these *three persons* could properly speak after this manner, *We, Our, Us*, &c. This Trinitarians grant, by drawing an argument, from the few instances to be found, of the use of plural words by Jehovah. In so doing you certainly admit, and even contend, that, although there is but one God, yet this one God is in such a sense three persons, that he can with propriety speak in plural language exactly as any other three persons would properly speak. This being as you suppose; then why is not *all* that is said by, and concerning Jehovah, in the plural number? If, "in the mode of the divine existence," there is a proper foundation for God to speak *once* as any other three persons would speak, why is there not the same foundation for him to speak *always* in the same manner? Yes, and if there be a proper foundation for him to speak *once* as three other persons would speak, how can it be otherwise than as improper for him ever to speak as but one person, as it would be for any other three persons to speak as but one? Would you say again, "because he is but one God?" I reply, he is not, as you say, one God in any such sense as renders it improper for him to speak as *three persons*. What, then, can it be short of a gross absurdity, and a palpable contradiction to say, *also*, that *it is proper* for him to speak as but *one person*? Truly, Sir, it does appear to me, that we should estimate the reason, which God has given us so highly as not to admit that it is perfectly proper for God to speak as *three persons*, and at the same time as proper for him to speak as *but one person*, without the most explicit, direct and positive evidence, that all this is true. Contend as much as you will for the unity of God, yet, so long as you say he is three persons, the unity contended for amounts to no reason, why he should speak and be spoken to, and of, as but one person. Whatever may be his unity, if he be not *one person only*, there can be no reason why he should address others, and be addressed as *but one*.

Moreover, you say there are *three persons in one God*; but why may you not with equal propriety say there are *three Gods in one person*? I really do not see why this would be any more inconsistent with propriety, nor why it would be any more inconsistent with divine testimony. In fact, to say there are three Gods in one person seems less inconsistent with scripture language and more accordant with some Trinitarian arguments, than to say "there are three persons in one God." By your writers much use is made of what is found in the beginning of John's gospel, and in the beginning of the epistle to the Hebrews,

But what is there in either of those passages, which so much favours the hypothesis of one God in three persons, as that of three Gods in one person? In one passage we read of the Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God. Here we find in some sense more Gods than one; but no intimation is given of more than one person in any God. Likewise in the other passage we find it written, that "unto the Son God saith, Thy throne O God is forever and ever." Here also we find mention of two Gods, but no intimation that any God is more than one person. Indeed, in connexion with the words last quoted, the most high God is expressly represented as but one person; for the Son is there spoken of as "the express image of ~~his~~ PERSON." Do not these things really seem more favourable to the supposition, that there are three Gods in one person, than to your theory? Besides, Trinitarian writers speak of certain Hebrew words, which are applied to God, and say the import of each of those words is "*Gods.*" Why then would you not be more consistent in contending for a plurality of Gods in one person than for a plurality of persons in one God? By thus changing your theory, is it not evident that you would render it far more consistent with all that Jehovah says, with all that is addressed to him, and with all that is said of him as one; and but one person? And as to the passages in the bible, which seem to imply that there is but one supreme God, would it not be far more easy to devise some plausible way to reconcile them with the suggested hypothesis, than it can be to find any way to reconcile all scripture with your present theory?

It is further to be considered, that Trinitarians have generally denied, that there is more than one being essentially divine. They have generally spoken of God as but one being, and yet as three persons. Can you, Sir, give any good reason for this? Are not the terms *person* and *being* in such a sense synonymous, that it would be just as consistent to say there are three beings in one person, as it is to say there are three persons in one being? Would not this alteration also serve to make your whole theory more consistent with itself? For it is an essential thing in your theory, that Jesus Christ is both God and man in *one person*. Here then you have two beings in *one person*. And by what rule can you have in one part of your theory *three persons in one being*, and in another part of it *two beings in one person*? Can these things so hold together as to be considered eternal truth of the highest importance for all to receive? The design of these queries is to lead you and others to reflect on that arbitrary, and improper use of *words without knowledge*, by which it appears to me, that multitudes have been misled to the unspeakable injury of our holy religion.

LETTER XI.

On the insuperable difficulties in respect to the supposed complex character of Christ.

SIR,

It is very evident, that the truth of your theory in question very much depends on the correctness of the hypothesis, that Jesus Christ is both God and man in one complex person; but in respect to this supposed union I find insuperable difficulties. You will, I think, readily admit, that if "a being, possessed of all divine perfections," and a proper man, possessed of soul and body, are not united as one person in our Lord, then the whole triune doctrine must be without any good foundation. This then is a point, which demands very careful examination. And on what, Sir, does the hypothesis, now in question, rest? Is it not of such an extraordinary character, that we should not receive it without finding it supported by the most explicit and positive testimony? But where shall such testimony be found? You will say, "Jesus Christ is called God, and is also called a man." Yes, Sir, and are not many other beings in scripture called Gods? And is not Jehovah himself called *a man*, "*a man of war?*" Is it not very unsafe in many cases to give the strongest sense to such words as are used in the bible? And should we not always avoid this, rather than to admit a great absurdity as a revealed truth? Now permit me to ask seriously, whether it be possible to form a more extravagant, or a more monstrous supposition, than to suppose that three divine persons and one proper man are all so united, as to constitute but one and the same individual being? Is not this more than mystery? Is it not the very height of absurdity? And can it be that we are required to believe any such thing as gospel truth, without such testimony, as cannot be found in the bible? Again, I ask, seriously, is it not in the nature of things impossible, that any two persons should become so united as to constitute but one person? Is there any thing in the whole field of analogy to favour this notion? Is it not contrary to every dictate of reason and common sense? Is it not totally inconsistent with every idea we can form of personal properties? And is it not as much a palpable contradiction to say, that two beings may be so united as to constitute but one person, as it would be to say, that one and the same being may cease to exist, and yet continue to exist at the same time?

Moreover, if it be true that Christ is both God and man, or if it be true that "a being possessed of all divine perfections" is so united to another being possessed of all the properties of a man, as to constitute but one person, then must it not unavoidably follow, that one part of this person was perfectly independent, while the other was absolutely dependent? That one part

of this person was almighty, while the other was feeble ? That one part of this person knew all things, while the other knew comparatively nothing ? That one part of this person possessed all things, while the other had not where to rest ? That one part of this person felt no privation, weariness, or want, while the other was subject to poverty, labour, fatigue, hunger, and thirst ? And that one part of this person had infinite enjoyment, while the other was sorrowful unto death, and endured the most exquisite torture and anguish ? Are not all these, and other like contrarieties and apparent impossibilities, necessarily involved in the supposed union of God and man in the person of Christ ? And what could appear more incongruous ? Yea, what can appear more impossible than it is, that one and the same person should be able and not able, at the same time, to do the same things ? Should know and not know, at the same time, the same things ? Should possess and not possess, at the same time, the same things ? Should receive and not receive, at the same time, the same things ? And should suffer and not suffer, at the same time, the same things, and even the same death ?

But in respect to the supposed union there are still further, if not greater difficulties. By one of your late writers it is expressly said, that Christ is "a being possessed of all divine attributes."* This is the testimony of a Trinitarian concerning Christ. Now, Sir, I ask very seriously, why did not some one of the inspired prophets explicitly give the same testimony concerning the Messiah, who was to come ? Why did not John the baptist do the same ? And, especially, why did not "the faithful and true witness," in some instance, on some occasion, explicitly give the same testimony concerning himself ? As he appeared "in fashion as a man" and "a prophet like unto Moses," it certainly was not very natural for him to be taken for "a being possessed of all divine perfections," without some very explicit testimony, and very positive evidence to this purpose. This, it should seem, was the less to be expected, because the great lawgiver, on whom the Jews had great reliance, had only said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren *like unto me.*" In view of this and other prophetic testimony of like import, was it to be expected that any, who saw and heard "Jesus of Nazareth" would acknowledge him in the character of "a being possessed of all divine perfections," without the most explicit and positive assurance of this fact ? Why then did not our Lord, who "for this end was born, and for this purpose came into the world to bear witness to the truth," why did he not on some occasion as plainly express his own "essential divinity" as Trinitarians do now ? Yea,

* See the Review, before quoted, in several places.

why did he say so many things of very contrary import without uttering, at any time, one sentence to prevent what you consider such a dreadful mistake as those are under, who do not own and worship him as "God, possessing all divine attributes?" Why did he so often speak of himself as "the Son of a man," and never in a single instance assume to himself any higher character than that of "the Son of God?" As you suppose he was really man as well as God, it is granted, that it is in a sense consistent with your views, that we should find him speaking of himself as "the Son of man;" but as, according to your theory, it was unspeakably more important that he should be known as "the true God," how can you account for it, that he never did so much as once explicitly give any such testimony? Among his sayings there are many, very many things, which you would say he spake as a man. But where are those things, which he spake as God? If he was as really God as man, he must have spoken, we should think, at least *sometimes*, in his highest character. But can you, Sir, point to a single instance, in which he spake as no one less than "a being possessed of all divine attributes" could speak? Certainly I have no knowledge of any such thing in his whole testimony. In his discourses, I often find such things, as it appears to me "a being possessed of all divine attributes" could *not* say; but not one, which a being, who had received his all from God, could not say with truth and propriety. I have further to ask, why our Lord was not careful to let it be distinctly known when he spake as a man, and when he spake as God? According to your views one would think it must have been essential to his acting in character as "the faithful and true witness," to have marked very explicitly such an important distinction. When in one of his epistles the apostle Paul said some things by divine inspiration, and others of his own judgment, he was very careful to let his readers know what they must receive as divine, and what as his own testimony. Now, Sir, if our Lord had been really God and man, speaking sometimes in one character, and at other times in the other character, would he not have been as careful to mark this very important distinction to the clear understanding of all men, as Paul was to do, as just stated? And seeing this faithful witness never did, on any occasion, give any intimation, that he ever spake otherwise than as one sent by his Father and dependent on him, is there not great reason to believe that your doctrine is not founded in truth?

But what is, in my view, the greatest difficulty in respect to the supposed union of two beings in the person of Christ, is yet to be urged. Is it not, Sir, utterly impossible for "a being possessed of all divine attributes" to be so united with an inferior being, as to make it consistent with truth for him to say such things, as run through the whole testimony of our Lord?

You certainly will not deny, that immutability is one of the attributes or perfections essential to the character of the true God. Does it not then unavoidably follow, that if our Lord was ever "possessed of all divine attributes" he continued to have all the same attributes when "he was made of the seed of David according to the flesh?" His union with a body prepared for him, or his taking, as you, I conclude, suppose he did, a *human soul and body* into personal union with his divinity, could in no degree take away, exclude, or diminish any of his "divine perfections." How then could it be consistent with truth for him to say, "My Father is greater than I." "I can of mine own self do nothing." "The Son can do nothing of himself." "The living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father!" How, Sir, could "a being, possessing all divine attributes" truly say these and many other things of like import? I know very well, that the common reply to such queries is, "he said such things as a man." But, Sir, his being in the sense that you suppose a man, does not alter the fact in respect to his divine attributes" Suppose it had been the "one God the Father, who had taken a man into the highest possible union with himself, could this have made it consistent with truth for him to have said, "The Son is greater than I." "I can of myself do nothing." "The Father can do nothing of himself?" Do you not at once perceive that nothing more inconsistent could be imagined? But if in the highest possible union with a man the almighty Father would continue as almighty as ever, why must it not have been exactly so with another person "essentially equal to the Father" in the same supposed union, with a man? Again, if the eternal Father should take any man into the highest possible union with himself, can you conceive that the man so united to God could need at any time any such supply, as would not naturally, and even *necessarily* result from his union with Deity? Or can you conceive that a man so united to the almighty Father could possibly have any occasion to pray to any other divine person under any possible circumstances whatever? How then on your own ground do you account for it, that the man Christ Jesus was so much a man of prayer, addressing all his petitions invariably to the Father? I conclude you will by no means say, that our Lord, in his character as "a being possessed of all divine attributes," had any occasion to pray. It was, you undoubtedly hold, only in his character as a man, that he did or *could pray*. For "God cannot deny himself." But still the great question is, why our Lord had, even *in his character as a man*, any occasion to pray? Were not "all divine perfections" enough to supply all his need as a man? Or, in other words, what could his supposed human nature ever need, which his supposed divine nature could not always supply? What occasion then could Christ

have at any time to ask any thing of the Father? Yea, how was it even possible for him to receive any thing from the Father? Having within himself "all divine perfections," what could be given even for his supposed human nature, which he did not already possess? Is there not enough in one "being possessed of all divine attributes" to fill millions of millions of human souls with all that they could possibly receive, and yet would not the fountain overflow as much as ever? Admitting then that one human soul was in the highest possible manner united to "a being possessed of all divine perfections," how could this render it possible for that same "being essentially divine" to have in any sense," all judgment *committed* unto him? Or to have in any sense "the spirit without measure *given* unto him?" Or to have in any sense "all power *given* unto him in heaven and on earth?" And above all, how could the supposed union of a human soul with "a being possessed of all divine attributes" render it possible for that same "being essentially divine" to need at any time, in any sense, "**AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN TO STRENGTHEN HIM?**" And how could the same being, with all his divine perfections, be brought into a situation, in which he could with propriety say, "**MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?**" Now, Sir, in view of these things, can you avoid seeing that the whole history of our Lord is exceedingly fictitious and hyperbolical, or that he is not, as has been so confidently affirmed, "a being, possessed of all divine perfection," "essentially equal to the Father?"

LETTER XII.

An attempt to shew, that nothing is gained by ascribing supreme divinity to our Lord.

SIR,

To me it appears very evident that the supreme divinity, which Trinitarians ascribe to our Lord, and that the distinct personality, which they ascribe to the Holy Spirit, are utterly superfluous. By writers on your side it is represented, that your doctrine is the "broad foundation of christianity." That those, who deny it, trust in an arm of flesh," and have "no God, no Saviour, no Comforter."^{*} But why all this reproach? Is not one divine agent, or one person, possessed of all divine attributes, as sufficient for the government of the universe as any number of such persons could be? Could a plurality of such persons effect, or accomplish any thing, which cannot be done by one person of unbounded perfection? And is not the highest interest of the universe as safe in the hands, and under the management of one such person as it could be in the hands and under the management of more than one?

^{*} See an address to the churches by the General Association of N. Hampshire.

In particular as it respects the salvation of lost men, what could be effected for our real benefit by three divine persons, which cannot be effected by the almighty power, infinite wisdom, and unbounded goodness of one self-existent almighty agent? Could not one such agent, without any to counsel him, devise the most perfect plan for our recovery from sin and woe, to holiness and felicity? Could not one such person provide the necessary Mediator, furnish him with all the necessary qualifications, give all the requisite authority, and grant to him all the needful aid to enable him to go through all the work of our redemption? Could not one such person also provide all the means, and all the requisite instruments to carry into effect his saving purpose? And could not one such person likewise "pour out" or "shed forth" enough of "His Spirit" to render the provided means effectual to the renovation, sanctification, consolation, and salvation of all those, who shall finally inherit his everlasting kingdom? Can this be denied? Or can it even be pretended, that three divine persons could *more easily*, or in any respect *better* accomplish all that has been mentioned, than it could be done by one self-existent, almighty agent? If not, then so far as we can see, is not the essential divinity, which you ascribe to our Lord, and is not the distinct personality, which you ascribe to the Holy Spirit, utterly superfluous?

I know, however, that it is often represented that a Mediator without supreme divinity is not a proper object of trust and confidence for such guilty, needy creatures as we are. It is often said, that no one less than a person essentially divine could make the necessary atonement for sin, or be worthy to be trusted with the keeping of our souls. But who is the best and the only adequate judge in respect to the attributes, without which a proper atonement could not be made? Are we to set up our own judgment as to what was requisite in this case, and then infer from it what is the character of real Mediator? Should we not rather consider, that the Most High himself was the only proper person to decide how much should be done and suffered by way of atonement? And should we not search the scriptures to see what they, in their own simplicity, testify of Christ; not having prepared ourselves by our own foolish reasonings to misunderstand, or to pervert divine testimony? Besides, what is the *real* amount of gain in respect to the atonement, resulting from the Trinitarian view of Christ? Earnestly as you all contend, that he is the true God, yet do any of you believe, that as *God*, in the highest sense, he *really* suffered for our redemption? One of your late writers says, "We hold Jesus Christ to be God and man united in one person, and that this one *complex* person suffered and died. We do not say that the ever blessed God *separately* from man suf-

ferred and died, but we do say that Jesus Christ *as God and man in one person* did suffer and die."* Now, Sir, are not these words without knowledge? And would the author just quoted, or would you, after all, allow "that the ever blessed God" did suffer in any *real* sense or degree to make atonement for sin? This may not be presumed. It must then follow after all that has been or can be said about "God and man in one complex person," according to your own theory, that all the *real* suffering for our offences was endured by that part of the supposed "complex person," which was "the offspring of David," and had no existence until about the time of Augustus Cæsar. Such is the simple fact in respect to the point now in question, as no Trinitarian can fairly deny. But how different, how exceedingly different is that, which to me appears to be the true scripture representation as to what has been done and suffered for our salvation! "The Word, who was in the beginning with God was made flesh,"—the "Son, by whom God made the worlds" "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" by taking "a body prepared for him" "and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!" In this high sense "God spared not his own Son; but freely delivered him up for us all." Yes, "though he were a Son," "the Son of the Highest," "brought forth" "and set up from everlasting," "he learned obedience by the things, which HE suffered," "giving HIMSELF for us." "The only begotten, who was in the bosom of the Father," "loved before the foundation of the world" "came forth from the Father, and came into the world" "in the form of a servant" and died for our offences." "The Lord from heaven," who "had glory with the Father before the world was," became poor for our sakes," "and suffered the just for the unjust to bring us unto God." "The Son of the Father in truth and love," "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person," through whom "God was manifested in the flesh," and unto whom was given "the Spirit not by measure," was "set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Such, Sir, is the view entertained of "Christ as our passover sacrificed for us," by men, who are charged with a denial "of the Lord, who bought them." And can this view of the subject be fairly compared with your own, without producing conviction in your own mind, that as it respects the atonement made for our sins, that essential divinity, which you ascribe to our Lord, is useless, and far more than useless? And is it not in respect to the whole work of the Mediator between God and men? For while you ascribe to Christ the character of the true God, can you say that in any

* Review before quoted, p. 45.

part of this character he is a Mediator between God and us; or that he is *as God* "our high Priest, entered into the heavens for us; or that he is *as God* our "advocate with the Father?" In short, is it not utterly impossible for you to point out any thing, which Christ, *as the true God*, has either *really* suffered, or *really* done, for the salvation of mankind? And by ascribing "all divine perfections" to our Lord, do you not theoretically make the one Mediator, our high Priest in the heavens, our advocate with the Father, and our exalted Prince and Saviour, *only the human part* of a supposed complex person, instead of "the first born of every creature," "the Lord from heaven," who, consenting to the arduous work of our redemption, long before his incarnation, said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,—a body hast thou prepared me?"

But will you, after all, contend, that in your supposed "*God and man in one person*" you have a more safe object of trust and confidence than can be found by those, who deny your theory? I ask, then, wherein is your *real* highest object of trust different from ours? Do you not habitually and *really* view Jesus Christ as "the way to the Father," and "come to God by him?" And have you even theoretically, an *iota more* in the God, to whom you come through the one Mediator, than we find in the "*one God the Father?*" Are not all divine attributes the sum total of of your theoretical ultimate foundation of hope and confidence? And can you avoid seeing, that we have precisely the same ultimate foundation? Viewing the blessed Jesus as "the Son," whom the Father sent to be the Saviour of the world," viewing him as "the Lord from heaven," who was made a partaker of "flesh and blood," and tasted death for us," and viewing him as one, in whom "it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell," we hold him as a Saviour mighty to save to the uttermost, all, who come unto God by him." And if we do truly come to the Father through the mediation of his Son, have we not then, in as high a sense as you have, all divine perfections to rest on for the accomplishment of all our salvation and all our desire? In short, is it not all that we or you or any others can need, to have God for our Saviour through Jesus Christ? And is not all the foundation the bible gives for your triune theory very clearly and beautifully comprized in the epistle of Paul to Titus, where he represents that "**GOD OUR SAVIOUR** hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which **HE** *shed on us* abundantly *through JESUS CHRIST* our **SAVIOUR?**"

LETTER XIII.

On the harmony of divine testimony without involving the supreme divinity of Christ. And the conclusion.

SIR,

It appears to me, that all, which the scriptures testify of Christ, may be very easily and fairly accounted for, without involving any such apparent inconsistencies and perplexities, as are involved in your theory. I do not, however, mean to include in what the scriptures testify of Christ, *all* that you and others apply to him. For the Bible is so evidently destitute of any thing, which is explicit and peremptory to your purpose, that your writers apply to our Lord a number of passages, which, as I believe, have no such meaning as they give them, and which they could quite as easily, and more naturally construe otherwise, if this would as well answer their purpose. As a specimen of such unfairness I will mention one instance, and attempt to shew how easily the text, to which I refer, may be taken from you. In the first epistle of John, the fifth chapter and twentieth verse, as your writers represent, our Lord is called "the true God." Now, Sir, ought it not to have been remembered, that the same inspired writer has elsewhere explicitly taught us that the Father is "the *only* true God?" And can there be a more palpable contradiction devised, than to say of one person, that he is "the *only* true God, and yet of another person, that he is "the true God?" Should any inspired writer be considered as having intended to affirm such opposite propositions without giving any reason or explanation? But this is not all. By the same rule that John is made to say, that Christ is the true God, he would be made to say, that our Lord is a deceiver and an antichrist. The whole verse, in which the words "the true God" are found, in our common translations stand thus, "And we know, that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we might know him, that is true; and we are in him, that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." Now, Sir, please to look at the seventh verse of the second epistle of John. "For many deceivers are gone into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." Do you not at once see, that an inspired writer has been very unfairly treated, to carry a point? By making the word "*This*" in the first case refer to Jesus Christ last mentioned, instead of letting it refer "to him that is true," the text is made to say, that Christ is the true God. Apply the same rule in the other case, and make the word "*This*" refer to the *last* instead of the foregoing noun, and the beloved disciple

is as fairly made to say, that his beloved Lord is "a deceiver and an antichrist," as many have made him say, that Christ is the true God. Is it not a bad cause, which requires such perversion of divine testimony for its support; or which hurries its advocates to apply scripture as the inspired writers never meant, and as a little care by way of fairly comparing scripture with scripture would prevent?

I shall now attempt to show how easily and fairly a number of such texts, as Trinitarians build upon, may be understood in agreement with the doctrine, that "To us there is but one God the Father, by whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things." Does the Prophet Isaiah in the name, by which he says the Messiah should be "called" include "the mighty God, the everlasting Father?" It is however to be considered, that he has first said "unto us a *child is born*, and unto us a *Son is given*." Now a son is a son still, whatever names may be given him. Any son may have his father's names and titles; yet he remains a son and a distinct being from his father. Besides, our Lord is in fact the mighty God and the everlasting Father of his people when compared with Moses and many others, who have been called gods and fathers to mankind. Is Christ again in the first of John's gospel called God? In the same connexion he is clearly distinguished from the supreme God, by being called the "Word, who was in the beginning with God;" and by his being designated as a person, whose glory is that "of the only begotten of the Father." Is he likewise called God in the first chapter to the Hebrews? There also he is clearly distinguished from the Most High, who, unto the Son saith, "thy throne O God is forever and ever—God even THY GOD hath anointed Thee." And in the same connexion Christ is spoken of as having "by inheritance a more excellent name than the angels," and this reason is given, "For unto which of the angels hath God said, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten Thee?" Is our Lord in another place spoken of as "over all, God blessed forever?" If this text, as we have it, is correctly rendered, yet where is the difficulty, seeing that Christ has said "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;" and it is further written, that "God hath made him to be the head over all things to the church?" Is he further spoken of as one, "who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God?" Who can say, that the word *equal* is so much as once used in the bible to express a perfect, absolute *equality*? In the same sense as Ahithophel was David's *equal*, so the word *equal* in the text just quoted may be fairly understood. Will you urge, that the Jews, on one occasion, understood Christ to make himself God, or *equal* with God? If so, you would do well to

look carefully at the closing part of the reply, which our Lord made to repel the groundless objection of the Jews, "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, "thou blasphemest BECAUSE I SAID I AM THE SON OF GOD?" Did our Lord say to his disciples, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father?" So, in the first chapter to the Romans, Paul says, "The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead." Does Jesus say, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father? At the same time he assigns this reason for it, namely, "the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son." If we would by no means neglect to honour the most high God, we must honour his Son, as *his Son and his messenger*, unto whom he hath committed all judgment. Do we in several instances read of worship paid to Christ? Yet we find no instance of his being worshipped as the supreme God. "When he bringeth in his first begotten into the world," he saith, "and let all the angels of God worship him!" Worship whom? "The first begotten." The wise men from the east are said to have worshipped the young child Jesus; but it was in the character of one "born king of the Jews." In the visions of the revelator, the heavenly millions are represented as worshipping more than one being. But how different is their worship from that of Trinitarians? They ascribe "blessing and glory and honour unto him, who sitteth on the throne and unto the LAMB *that was slain*,"—"unto GOD and the LAMB." Should every knee bend at the name of Jesus? Yes, because that "God hath highly exalted him, and hath given him a name, which is above every name," therefore "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, *to the glory of God the Father.*" Does Jesus say, "I am the first and the last?" he also adds, "I am he that liveth and was dead." And certainly he was neither *before*, nor is he *above* his Father. But he is the first and the last as there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Do the scriptures in some instances ascribe the work of creation to Christ? Yes, and also inform us, that "God hath made all things by Jesus Christ." In like manner they ascribe the same things to God and to his servant Moses, and the same things to Solomon, and to those employed by him in building the temple. Is the Son of God spoken of as a being "upholding all things by the word of his power?" At the same time we are taught, that "*all power is given unto him.*" Likewise as to all the knowledge, and wisdom, and every thing he possesses, is it not enough, that we are expressly told, that "it hath pleased the

Father that is him should all fulness dwell," "all the fulness of the godhead." Shall it be disputed, whether it were possible for God to communicate what his word declares that he has communicated to his beloved Son ? Finally, should believers and their children through every age be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ? What could be more pertinent than this, seeing that "the one God the Father," through the "one Mediator," is pleased to "shed forth" His Spirit to save men by that washing of regeneration, signified by christian baptism ? Now, Sir, will you not allow, that I have brought to view from the bible the principal things, on which you and other Trinitarians rely for the support of the doctrine in question ? And will you not also allow, that the construction, which I have given to such scripture, appears as easy and as fair, as that usually given on your own side ? Or, if you will not allow this, may you not have reason to fear, that it may be owing to very strong, and very interested prepossessions ? Or admitting, that in some instances the construction I have given of divine testimony is not so natural and just, as it should be ; yet is it not made clearly evident, that it is by no means difficult to find in all, or in nearly all that the scriptures testify of Christ, some clear, important meaning, such as harmonizes with all other scripture, without involving any such paradox as that of two beings in one person, or as that of three persons in one being, or in one God." Where then is the necessity of contending for any such hypothesis ? And by what rule can any such theory be considered bible doctrine ? Is it not undeniable, that no such hypothesis is stated in the sacred pages ? Yea, and is it not undeniable, that the hypothesis of three persons in one divine being, and also that of two beings in the person of Christ, do each of them clash, in a great degree, with the plainest meaning of very many passages, which we find in the volume of inspiration ? And can you deny, that each of the just mentioned hypotheses is exceedingly perplexing to the human mind ? Or can you deny, that they really involve a great portion of scripture in very great obscurity, and in many, very many, apparent contradictions ? Must it not be wrong, extremely wrong, thus to darken sacred counsel by words and hypotheses of mere human device, requiring all men to subscribe to the same, under heavy pains and penalties ? I cannot doubt, that you and many other discerning Trinitarians have at times felt a great degree of perplexity respecting the supposed Trinity in unity, and the supposed union of two intelligent beings in the person of Christ. Yet you have not been willing to believe, that the wisdom of men has been the sole origin of these strange things ! They have so long been considered essentials in christianity, and so many men of great re-

nown for talents and piety have so often uttered the most terrific denunciations against all, who depart from, or call in question the truth of such *orthodoxy*, that, as I believe, all such inquiry, as the case requires, has been either wholly prevented, or rendered very superficial. This may at first seem to you uncandid and uncharitable. But if you will duly consider, and fairly weigh all that I have now set before you, I am persuaded you will not wonder, that it appears to me impossible for any rational creature to remain a Trinitarian after a patient, impartial, and thorough examination of the subject. And I will venture to say moreover, that if you could have for one hour that increased delightful view of the beautiful simplicity, and perfect harmony of divine testimony, and thus enhancing view of the wonderful love of God in *really* giving his only begotten Son, and of the astonishing love of Christ in *really* giving "HIMSELF FOR US," which are the consequence of rising above Trinitarian prepossessions and prejudices, you would then view what I have written, as a labour of love, and would be thankful for the same to the God of all grace.

The things, which I have now set before you, are the fruit of sober, careful, and prayerful inquiry, and meditation of long continuance; and I earnestly entreat you not to pass them over in haste, and not to lay them aside in displeasure. Be entreated to let these things occupy your attention, until you shall have duly weighed each argument separately, and the whole collectively, as in the balances of the sanctuary, and as justice to yourself and to the cause of truth obviously require. Candidly overlook all such defects, as are more or less common to all human productions, and let no such thing prevent a due estimation of whatever there may be of sound argument, or of any other useful matter. Do not be in haste to counteract any impression, which the letters may make on the minds of other readers. Take sufficient time to judge, as in the cool of the day, whether the work is likely to do any real injury to the cause of pure and undefiled religion.

If it shall seem needful for you to take any public notice of what I have written, be entreated to do yourself and the cause of religion the honour of writing in such a spirit of candour, meekness, and gentleness, as shall give you no pain in the nearest view of death, judgment, and eternity. Do not, I beseech you, make use of such weapons, as have too often been used in religious controversy to the unspeakable injury of the christian cause. Do not sound an alarm against heresy without making it evident, that the cause of truth and righteousness is really in danger. Do not repeat the threadbare arguments of Trinitarians, without taking due notice of what has been said to point out their fallacy. Do not

evade the arguments I have set before you, on the ground of such mystery, as has no other origin than in the wisdom of men. Do not substitute your own strong assertions for divine testimony; do not indulge yourself in declamation instead of producing sound arguments; and do not address the passions and prejudices of men instead of offering light for the understanding.

If I am in material error as to the main points, on which I have now written, as not a very few are involved with me in the same, it is certainly of no small importance that something should be done to convince and reclaim us. But, Sir, be assured, that we are not to be convinced and reclaimed by any such measures, as have hitherto been adopted. You may continue to publish such insinuations, invectives, and aspersions, as have appeared in the Panoplist. Others may continue to publish such things as have, in various forms, and under various titles, appeared against the writings on our side. Small associations, and general associations, may continue to pass pointed resolutions and addresses, and may continue to send them abroad extensively to warn the churches. The Trinitarian clergy may continue to embrace almost every favourable opportunity, as at the meetings of presbyteries, associations, conventions, and councils, to preach against heresy with pointed allusion to our opinions and writings. Many of our Trinitarian brethren in the ministry may also continue to pass by such of us as are in the ministry, and continue to withhold from us the right hand of fellowship. And other things, such as I am unwilling to name may be repeated; but none of these things, nor will all these things, move us to relinquish what we believe to be the truth, as it is in Jesus. So long as it shall appear to us, that the views, which we entertain, are supported by the most plain sense, and by the most perfect agreement of all scripture; and so long as we shall find not the least occasion to use any other than the very words of divine testimony, quoted in the fairest manner, to express our views with sufficient clearness in all our public performances, we shall, I think, hold on, and hold out in the way we have taken, whether we may have less or more to bear on this account. Yet we by no means consider ourselves infallible. We know that we are liable to misapprehensions and mistakes like other men. And we should, I think, take it kindly of you, or any other writer, to meet such arguments, as have now been set before you, in a fair, candid manner, endeavouring to point out as clearly as possible any such fallacy as may be supposed to be in them. And be assured, Sir, that this is the only way, in which you, or any other man, can do any thing to set us right, admitting that we are in the wrong.

I shall now conclude by recommending and urging one important question to the very serious consideration of all on your side, to whose knowledge it may come. The question is this, Is it not on the whole advisable for all Trinitarians to discontinue the use of such triune words and doxologies, as are not found in the bible? Is it not at least possible, that they may be in no small degree erroneous, and of very hurtful tendency? Does not a becoming deference for the language of inspiration absolutely require what I have now suggested? What good reason can be given, why Trinitarians should not as readily agree to give up such words and doxologies, as to join with other christians to send the bible among the destitute "*without note or comment?*" How can they be consistent without acting, in both cases, in like manner? Even if they continue to suppose, that there is in the bible all that foundation for the triune faith, which has been imagined, yet why is not the language, which the spirit of inspiration has taught, the very best that can be used on those great points, which are purely a matter of revelation? Why should it be any more necessary, or expedient, to use now, any such phrase as that of three persons in one God, or any such doxology as that of glory to the Father, to the Son, and the Holy Spirit, than it was in the days of Moses, or in the days of after prophets, or in the days of the apostles? Was there not in regard to many things, a great departure from the simplicity and purity of earlier periods of the church about the time when the triune article of faith, and the triune doxology were "invented." Did not the introduction of such innovations greatly operate to divide and to distract the church? Has there ever been such unity and fellowship among any considerable number of christians at any time, since the introduction of such human inventions, as there had been before? Is there any reason to think, that such desirable unity, and brotherly kindness, and charity, as characterized the primitive church, will ever be restored without an entire discontinuance of those things, which have caused such lamentable schisms, and the most unchristian revilings? Has it not too much the appearance of "will worship," for ever so large a majority to insist on the continuance of such articles and forms of human device, as are extremely repugnant to the views and feelings of some, who would readily and gladly subscribe to all that was required, and could heartily join in all such worship, as was found among christians in the apostolic age?* And is there the least

* In the same book, most largely quoted before, the author says, "I have already lost considerable preferments by refusing to subscribe the thirty-nine articles again, to qualify myself for great things, which a most powerful and gen-

reason to expect, that union and communion among all, who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, will ever be restored, until confessions of faith, forms of covenant, and modes of worship, shall again be as simple, and as much confined to "words, which the Holy Spirit teacheth," as they were in those days, when to their great credit it was said, "Behold, how the christians love one another?" But relative to the same matter there is another consideration, which I may not omit. Is it not undeniable, that the triune words and forms in such common use among christians, are exceedingly in the way to prevent the conversion, both of Mahometans and Jews, to christianity? Do not the vastly numerous followers of that arch impostor Mahomet, with one voice contend for the unity of God as but one person, and very strongly object against christianity because, as they think, christians worship, and call on *them* to worship, more Gods than one? And do not the less numerous, but more unhappy dispersed Jews with one voice say, in respect to Trinitarian phraseology and worship, "we have no such words or forms in the writings of Moses and the prophets, our fathers never worshipped a *three one God*." If your religion requires this, it cannot be from heaven, and we never can become christians?" Have pity, my Trinitarian readers, have pity on the many millions of deluded perishing

erous patron offered me. The honestum is my philosophy; and love to God and man is my religion. If saerficing all worldly considerations, for acting according to my inward persuasion, is a proof of imprudence, I am indeed chargeable with it." p. 188.

Sir Richard Blackstone, in his preface to his fine poem on Creation, says, "Whoever shall set about to mend the world and reform men's *notions* as well as their manners, will certainly be the mark of much scandal and reproach, and will effectually be convineed, that it is possible that the greatest lovers and benefactors of mankind, may be represented by the multitude, whose opinions they contradict, as the worst of men. The hardy undertakers, who express their zeal to rectify the sentiments of a prejudiced people, in matters of religion, who labour to stem the tide of popular error, and strike at the foundation of any ancient established superstition, must *themselves* expect to be treated as pragmatal and insolent innovators, disturbers of the publick peace, and the greatest enemies of religion." p. 192.

"A gentleman of eminence, talking one day with the late bishop of L—, concerning Dr. Clarke, said, that he was surprised the conveocation had set themselves to persecute with so much violence, a man, who was an ornament, and an honour to the whole order, by his great learning and sense. Sense! cried the bishop, indeed I think Dr. Clark is very deficient in that; for if he had but *common sense* he would take more care of himself. O my lord, I understand you, (said the gentleman) but if neglecting a man's worldly interest proves, that he wants common sense, I fear it will be found that the apostles, and our Lord himself, had no great share of it." p. 212.

"Happy would it have been for the world, if men had rested their inquiries about religion, where God rested in his revelation of it. Only the clear light of truth can guide men to virtue. The doctrines, which are dark and uncertain, can only lead men to darkness and uncertainty. What harm is it to us, if fools condemn us? They have always, from the beginning of the world, exclaimed most against those, who would do them the greatest good." p. 135.

Mahometans ! Have pity also on the scattered, numerous, unhappy seed of Abraham, that friend of God, through whom, and through whose offspring so great blessings have come on us Gentiles. Have pity on such perishing multitudes of our brethren of the human family, and lay aside, I entreat you, such controversial inventions, as render the everlasting gospel in *their view*, unworthy of their acceptation !

THE END.

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