

of the Council of Nice on this head was simply this:—"I believe in the Holy Ghost."—But at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381, an addition was made to it, asserting the separate Deity of the third person. As amended by this Council the clause runs thus, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, &c." The words, "and the Son" above enclosed in brackets, were another subsequent addition. Thus it was, that at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381, the doctrine of the Trinity received what the learned Mosheim (himself a Trinitarian,) styled its "finishing touch." Now we are strongly of opinion that if this doctrine had been known to, or taught by, Moses and the prophets, or Christ and his apostles, it would not have required its "finishing touch" from the Council of Constantinople.

Next we have the *Athanasian Creed*. We have no certainty concerning its origin. Waddington says it is commonly attributed to Vigilius Tapsensis who lived at the end of the fifth century. The writer whoever he was, forged the name of Athanasius to it in order to gain it credit and currency. In it we have the doctrine of the Trinity stated in a bolder and more decisive form than in the Nicene creed. This will be seen by the following extract:—"The Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty; and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet there are not three Almighties: but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord; and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity, to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; but the whole three persons are co-eternal together; and co-equal. So that in all things as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity." Now this creed was not generally received among Christians until probably four centuries after it was written. It was never established by any general Council of the Church. The doctrine of a "Trinity of persons numerically the same, or having all one and the same singular existent essence," which may be considered, we suppose, the perfected and proper form, was owned and consummated by the Lateran Council, A. D. 1215. It is worthy of note likewise that it was this same Council which established the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

Thus by casting a careful glance into the history of the Church, we find that the doctrine of the Trinity had no existence amongst the Christians of the earliest times—that it crept into the Christian system from the refined speculations of Gentile philosophy—that its prevalence was secured by a rigorous and persevering exercise of worldly power—and that it can be marked from one period to another in its progress of formation. From all of which we derive a powerful reason for declining to receive it.

5. Not from the writings of Unitarians alone, but even from the writings of Trinitarians themselves we derive an argument against it. If the doctrine of the Trinity were plainly and intelligibly revealed, we should observe no discordancies or contradictions on the subject amongst those who hold it. Though Unitarians may differ on minor points, yet there is no discordance among them concerning the doctrine of the Godhead. They all agree that God is one, and that the Father is the only true God. But among Trinitarians we find wide and important differences in the matter of the Trinity. We here submit a sample of those discordancies, taken from the *Unitarian Miscellany*:—

* The argument here disclosed by Ecclesiastical History against the doctrine of the Trinity surely comes with great force. The attempt made to explain it away, by saying that the Deity of the Son and the Deity of the Holy Ghost were only declared in the order of time in which they were denied, seems to us very unsatisfactory. For it is admitted that the evidence for the distinct and separate Deity of the third person is less obvious and copious than that for the Deity of the second. This being the case, it should certainly have been called in question before the other, and thus we would be led to look for the assertion of the Deity of the Holy Ghost before the declaration of the Deity of the Son. But the case is just the reverse.

† Cudworth's Intellectual System, p. 604. Noron's Statement, p. 61.

‡ The catalogue of discordancies inserted above may be found cited in connection with another subject, in a former number of the *Bible Christian*.

The ATHANASIAN CREED says,—"The Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty; and yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding."

We will now bring Church against Church, on a very important article of this Creed.

The GREEK CHURCH holds that the Holy Ghost "is from the Father only, and not from the Father and the Son."

The NEW HAMPSHIRE GENERAL ASSOCIATION has said that "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are names of office, not of essence: these three are self-existent persons in one God."

The venerable BAXTER advises us "to be none of those who shall charge with heresy all who say the three Persons are God understanding himself, God understood by himself, and God loving himself."

"What are my admiring thoughts of God?" says DOOLITTLE on the Assembly's Catechism, "one single essence, yet three in subsistence; of three, that one cannot be the other, yet all three are one, that are distinct, yet really are the same."

But Dr. SOUTH asserts that there is "one infinite, eternal mind, and three somethings that are not distinct minds."

Dr. SHRELOCK, however, refutes Dr. South, by insisting that "the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are as really distinct persons as Peter, James, and John; each of which is God. We must allow each person to be a God. These three infinite minds are distinguished, just as three created minds are, by self-consciousness."—Dr. S. also says, that "to say there are three divine persons, and not three distinct infinite minds, is both heresy and nonsense."

But Dr. HOPKINS assures us that "it must be carefully observed, that when this word [Person] is applied to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as three distinct persons, it does not import the same distinction as when applied to men."

Dr. WATERLAND's idea of the Trinity was that of "three distinct persons, entirely equal to, and independent upon each other, yet making up one and the same Being."

Dr. WALLIS, however, who called himself a Trinitarian, says, that "the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are no more three distinct intelligent persons, than the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, are three Gods." He further says, that "the three persons are only three eternal relations of God to his creatures, as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; while Dr. South had said that the three persons are three postures, or internal relations of the one substance of Deity to itself."

Here is Archbishop SECKER's explanation:—"Since there is not a plurality of Gods, and yet the Son and Spirit are each of them God no less than the Father; it plainly follows, that they are, in a manner by us inconceivable, so distinguished from him that no one of them is the other."

We are told in the Athanasian Creed, that "in this Trinity none is afore or after other;" but Mr. SPAULDING tells us that "the divine principle necessarily supposes an order of divine persons, viz.—a covenant maker or mover, which gives the idea of a first person; a covenant subject, or one brought into covenant, which gives the idea of a second person; and a covenant interest, which gives the idea of a third person. And here again a Trinity is implied:—first, the inaugurator, or one who anoints; second, the inaugurated, or one who is anointed; and third, the oil, which the anointer pours, and the anointed receives."

The following is Bishop BURNAGE's explanation of the Trinity:—"If I say the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be three, and every one distinctly God, it is true; but if I say they be three, and every one a distinct God, it is false. I may say the divine persons are distinct in the divine nature, but I cannot say the divine nature is divided into the divine persons. I may say, God the Father is one God, and the Son is one God, and the Holy Ghost is one God; but I cannot say the Father is one God, and the Son another God, and the Holy Ghost a third God. I may say that the Father beget another who is God, yet I cannot say he beget another God. And from the Father and the Son proceedeth another who is God, yet I cannot say, from the Father and the Son proceedeth another God."

Here is Bishop GASTRELL's explanation:—"The Father includes the whole idea of God and something more; the Son includes the whole idea of God and something more; the Holy Ghost includes the whole idea of God and something more; while all together, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, make one entire God, and no more."

Dr. BUNNET maintains "one self-existent, and two dependent beings; but asserts that the two latter are so united to and inhabited by the former, that by virtue of that union, divine perfections may be ascribed, and divine worship paid to them." In opposition to the Athanasian Creed, which says that the Son is begotten and not created, and that the Holy Ghost is neither created nor begotten, but proceeding, he avers that "the Son and the Holy Ghost are created beings, and are Gods only by the indwelling of the Father's Godhead."

Bishop BURGESS, teaches, that "the Father is a person, but not a being, the Son is a person but not a being, and the Holy Ghost is a person but not a being, and these three nonentities make one perfect being."

The doctrine of the FRENCH and BELGIC CONFESSION is that "the Father is the cause of all; the Son is his wisdom and word; and the Holy Ghost is his virtue or power."

A CONJECTURE DIVINE informs us, that "we may consider God as standing in a circle; standing on this part he is the Father, on that he is the Son, and on the other he is the Holy Spirit."

And HENRI, in his Bampton lectures, says that "the Father is the first person in the Trinity, the archangel Michael the second, and the angel Gabriel the third."

In such discordancies and conflicting statements, we perceive ample evidence of the uncertainty and unsoundness of the whole theory.

The doctrine of the Trinity, as we have already said, stands on a basis of inferential reasoning, not on any express scriptural declaration. Certain texts are selected, and by the peculiar exposition given to them, or by joining several isolated texts together, the triune theory of the Godhead is constructed. But in building it up in this way, Trinitarian Theologians disagree among themselves concerning the validity of the

passages for the purposes alleged. "There is scarcely one text," says the eminent John Locke, "alleged to the Trinitarians, which is not otherwise expounded by their own writers." Take for example one of the very first passages employed by Trinitarians generally, to construct their system. Gen. i. 1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In this text the Hebrew word *Elohim*, translated *God*, is in the plural number, whence it is argued that there is a plurality of persons in the Deity. But Professor Stuart, and other Hebrew grammarians, tell us that such a form of expression (called by them the *pluralis excellentie*) was "commonly employed by the Hebrews for the sake of emphasis." And John Calvin himself in his note on the passage especially warns his readers "against such violent interpretations." From all this we derive additional evidence to convince us of the uncertainty and unsoundness of the Trinitarian system.

Here we must pause. Our remarks on this subject have extended much further than we purposed on commencing. In the foregoing sketch we have given some of our reasons for declining to receive the commonly-accepted doctrine of the Trinity. Are they, or are they not sufficient? Reader, judge for thyself.

THE FAITH OF THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN.

The following Statement of the Unitarian Faith may not be out of place in our present sheet. It is taken from the Discourse of the Rev. Dr. Gannett, preached at the dedication of the Montreal Unitarian Church:—

"We believe in God as the Supreme, Perfect, and Infinite Being, Lord of heaven and earth, Author of all life, Source of every blessing, Searcher of hearts, and Judge of men. We believe in his universal, constant, and righteous providence, through which alone the frame-work of the creation and the processes of animate or inanimate existence are sustained. We believe in his moral government, which he exercises over all beings endowed with intellectual or moral capacities, and which, as it is rightly exercised, so is inflexibly administered. We believe in his paternal character, in which he has been pleased to reveal himself to our admiration and love; a character which never shews him to us as weakly indulgent or capriciously tender, but as always consistent with his own perfections while full of parental regard towards men. We believe in the requisitions of duty which he has promulgated, by which are laid upon us the obligations of outward and inward righteousness, and it is made incumbent on us to cultivate purity, devotion, disinterestedness, and the harmonious expansion of our nature, that the result may be an excellence which shall redound to the glory of God. We believe in his mercy, which enables him, without impairing the integrity of his government or subverting the original conditions of his favour, to forgive the penitent sinner and admit the renewed soul to an inheritance of eternal life. We believe in his revelations, which he has made by those of old times who spake as they were moved by the holy spirit—Moses and the Divinely-inspired teachers of the Jewish people, and in a latter age by Jesus Christ, the Son of his love and the Messenger of his grace. We believe that God is one in every sense in which the term can be applied to him—one in nature, in person, in character, in revelation: and therefore we are Unitarians. We believe that Jesus was the Christ—the Anointed and Sent of God, whose truth he proclaimed, whose authority he represented, whose love he unfolded: and therefore we are Christians. We believe that Jesus Christ came on a special mission to our world—to instruct the ignorant, to save the sinful, and to give assurance of immortality to those who were subject to death; that such a Teacher and Redeemer was needed; that he spake as never man spake, lived as never man lived, and died as never man died. We read the history of his life with mingled admiration and gratitude. We are moved by his cross to exercises of faith, penitence, and hope. We rejoice in his resurrection, and celebrate him as the Head of his Church, the authoritative Expounder of the Divine will, the faultless Pattern of the Christian character, the Manifestation and Pledge of the true life. We believe that man is a free and responsible being, capable of rising to successive heights of virtue, or of falling into deeper and deeper degradation; that sin is his ruin, and faith in spiritual and eternal realities the means of his salvation; that if he sin, it is through choice or negligence, but that in working out his own salvation he needs the Divine assistance. We believe that man in his individual person is from early childhood, through the force of appetite, the dis-

advantage of ignorance, and the strength of temptation, liable to moral corruption; that social life is in many of its forms artificial, and in many of its influences injurious; and that both the individual and society must be regenerated by the action of Christian truth. We believe that all life, private and public, all human powers and relations, all thought, feeling, and activity, should be brought under the control of religious principle and be pervaded by Christian sentiment. We believe that piety is the only sure foundation of morality, and morality the needed evidence of piety. We believe that "perfection from weakness through progress" is the law of life for man; and that this law can be kept only where an humble heart is joined with a resolute mind and an earnest faith. We believe that men should love and serve one another, while all love the Heavenly Father, and follow the Lord Jesus to a common glory. We believe in human immortality, and a righteous retribution after death: when they who have lived in obedience, or reconciled themselves through sincere repentance, shall enter upon a nobler fruition of life; while they who have been disobedient and impenitent, shall realize the consequences of their folly in shame and suffering. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as containing the authentic records of God's wonderful and gracious ways, seen in the history of his ancient people, and in the miraculous works and Divine teachings of Jesus and his Apostles; and to these Scriptures we appeal as the decisive authority upon questions of faith or duty, interpreting them in the devout exercise of that reason, through which alone we are capable of receiving a communication from Heaven. We believe in the Christian Church, as a consequence of the labours and sufferings by which Christ has gathered unto himself, out of many nations and communions, "a peculiar people," embracing his Gospel and cherishing his spirit—the Church on earth, with its ministry, its ordinances and its responsibilities, the anticipation and promise of the Church in heaven.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES' RELIEF BILL.

The Bills for extending certain privileges to the "Unitarian Christians" of Toronto, to the "Christian" connexion and "Bible Christians" of Upper Canada, and to the "Christian Universalist Association," have all passed the Legislative Assembly, and are now before the Legislative Council. They have all been read a second time in the Council, and are to be brought before a Committee of the whole on the 15th inst.—It is gratifying to observe that in neither branch of the Legislature has there been any desire evinced to withhold the privileges sought for by the petitioners in the several cases.

LOWELL, MASS.

A new Unitarian congregation has been organized at Lowell, Mass., and the Rev. M. A. H. Niles installed pastor. The services of installation took place on the 8th April, when the sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. Peabody, of Boston.—Mr. Niles was formerly a Trinitarian Congregationalist Minister at Marblehead, but has recently renounced Trinitarianism.

RENUNCIATION OF TRINITARIANISM.

The Rev. R. HASSALL, recently a Minister of the "Methodist New Connexion" in this city, will deliver a discourse in the Unitarian Church, on Sunday evening, 17th instant, in which he will state his reasons for renouncing the doctrine of the Trinity.

ERRATUM.—In 1st page, 3rd column, 29th line from bottom,—for *expatiate* read *expiate*.

MRS. DANA'S LETTERS.

LETTERS TO RELATIVES & FRIENDS, chiefly in Reply to Arguments in support of the Doctrine of the TRINITY.

BY MARY S. B. DANA,

Author of "The Southern and Northern Harps," "The Parted Family," &c.

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