

Unhappily it was not so. In the confusion and turmoil of the Reformation we find the same old heresies started again, and Socinianism called into question once more the doctrine of the Trinity.

It is difficult to distinguish between Socinianism and modern Unitarianism. They both agree in denying that the Son is equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and both fall into the errors consequent upon such denial. The old Socinianism refused to believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person; denied that we inherit the corruption of Adam's Nature; asserted that Christ's merits consisted not in the death which He died upon the Cross, but in His life, His teaching, His example. Socinianism really undermines the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement. If Jesus Christ was not God, then the whole fabric of Christianity falls to the ground. His Blood does not wash away our sins. Union with Him does not mean that we are really partakers of the Divine Nature. And if we are not sharers of the Divine Nature, where is the pledge of our immortality? In such a case S. Paul would have said that of all men we are the most miserable. What the ancient Socinians taught, modern Unitarians hold more or less definitely. The teaching and example of Christ, not His Person and His Sacrifice, are all important with them. We may imitate Him in His admirable life; but we cannot be made one with Him in any real sense and so be made one with God.

The existence of Unitarianism warns us that we should carefully examine what is our faith. The Unitarian revolts from what he thinks is the creed of the Churchman—belief in three Gods. He is mistaken, of course. But how many there are who unconsciously think of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost as three separate Beings, each independent of the other, though acting in harmony together! As a matter of fact, the Creeds of the Church insist upon the Unity of the Godhead as fully as any Unitarian could do. 'To say there be three Gods or three Lords is forbidden by the Catholic religion.' With the Jew, with

the Mohammedan, with the Unitarian, the Church asserts that 'God is One.' Though the Father is God and the Son is God and the Holy Ghost is God, yet they are not three Gods but one God.

The doctrine of the three distinct Persons in one God is a great mystery. Nor is it to be expected that created beings should be able to understand and measure their Maker. He is past finding out. The very terms we use to describe Him are inadequate for the purpose. And so the Creed teaches us to bow our whole being before Him and say, not we know or understand, but *we worship* one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. We are like the angels in heaven, who dare not presume to do aught else than cast their crowns, the gifts of reason and affection with which He has endowed them, before the Throne, crying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts! Heaven and earth are full of His glory.'

The Unitarians have tried to reason out what God intended should be received with submission—the mystery of His own Being.

And now let us notice in conclusion that, though the Being of God is a mystery, and must remain so, to poor finite creatures like ourselves, yet Revelation has made clear what He is to us.

The Creed reminds us that we believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. That is, first we agree with the Deist that God made everything visible and invisible. But, as Almighty, we believe that He still has control over the world He has made. So far from being removed from it, He guides and regulates its affairs. Were His hand to be withdrawn, then all things would return to the chaos out of which they were brought.

Then there is the word 'Father' by which we acknowledge all that the Unitarian prizes so highly. God is our Father. We are His children. He loves us and desires our happiness. He does more, and here we go beyond the Unitarian. He gives His love practical effect. He sends His Only-begotten Son into the world, that the world through Him may be saved.