

sist of three divine individuals equal in dignity and power, but separate in volition and consciousness? The passage in 1 Corinthians viii. (4, 5 and 6), seems to have been dictated by the Holy Ghost to guard us from this very danger of carrying the thought of the triply revealed personality one step further; whether into the multiplication of gods, or into the dividing of God.

Certainly the statement, "but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we for Him" is very strong and very clear, following as it does a still more general statement that there is "none other God but one." The symbol of the trefoil, as an emblem of the Trinity, appears objectionable because it does represent a structure divided into three equal parts identical in character; and even the Latin church, in the Roman Catholic Prayer Book, repeatedly affirms "the holy and undivided Trinity" and asserts "the confession of an everlasting holy Trinity and of the undivided unity thereof." The figure of the trefoil does not by any analogy correspond with any of the divine revelations concerning God. The 18th verse of the first chapter of John, as it stands in the two oldest, the Sinaitic and Vatican, manuscripts, gives us at least one clear thought of the deity. "No man hath seen God at any time; *the only begotten God* in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him." (Ought the first Aorist *middle*, without an accusative, to be translated "he hath declared himself"?) The relation of the Son to the Father in the Deity is here partly exposed.

The difference between the force of the two expressions "the only begotten Son" and "the only begotten God" is most material to our human intelligence. "The only begotten Son" (as it is in our present reading) tells us precisely what other texts tell us. "The only begotten God" is an expression unique: which reveals fresh and special truth. It accords exactly with the grand declaration concerning Christ that "in Him dwelleth *all the fullness of the Godhead* *BODILY*."

The words "in the bosom of the Father" may not be improved, but may be varied with literality to convey the more general idea contained in them. The word translated "bosom" means likewise lap, bay, gulf, or hollow place in general.

"The Son of God," "the only begotten God" contained in the invisible and ineffable Father hath expounded, exhibited, elucidated "The Father."

If we conceive a circle described at the extremity of an infinite radius—the area of such a circle might be symbolical of God "the Word," "the only begotten God"; its centre being the humanity of Christ "God *manifested* in the flesh."

Beyond that circle conceive another indescribable circle whose radius from the same centre should be infinitely multiplied by infinity, and whose *circumference* in its vastness, visible only by segment, should appear as a *straight line*; the area of that circle might be symbolical of the Father, into whose bosom the Son is revealed as begotten.

Then conceive countless radii filling the *outermost* circle and emanating from it at right angles to it and yet converging to meet in the person of "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Those rays, more numerous than infinity, multiplied by infinity, and filling and permeating immensity—that *radiation*, all consecrated in Christ "the Lord of glory," while issuing from the "hypostasis" of the Father, might symbolize the Holy Spirit "proceeding from the Father" and uniting the Father and the Son (John xv. 26).

Such a conception, miserably inadequate as it is, has this merit as an *emblem* that it does not nullify and cancel explicit Scriptures—such as 1 Corinthians, ii. 10 and 11, in which the Spirit of God is declared to search the depths of God just as the spirit of a man within him (his own consciousness) "knoweth the things of a man:" and Revelation 4, where the marked use of the singular personal pronoun "Thou" (*su ektis*)—coupled with the declaration "for Thy pleasure" (*dia to thelema sou*, for *Thy will*)—seems to preclude us from imagining three volitions in the Godhead.

CHRISTMAS IN THE ALLEY.

BY OLIVE THORNE.

"I declare for 't to-morrow is Christmas day an' I clean forgot all about it," said old Ann the washer-woman, pausing in her work and holding the flat-iron suspended in the air.

"Much good it 'll do us," growled a discontented voice from the coarse bed in the corner.