

beauty or bliss for him there; but he wanders among them a discontented stranger, self-tormenting and solitary, without companion, enjoyment or home—his depraved habits and corrupted taste rendering insipid and loathsome, the light and felicity of eternity.—*Id.*

THE TWO NATURES IN CHRIST.

[From *Emlyn's Humble Inquiry.*]

What can be said against the plain arguments that are advanced to prove the subordination of our Lord Jesus Christ to his Father? I imagine our opposers have but one shift left for the evading them, and that is a distinction, which serves them in all cases; for they say, Jesus Christ speaks these things of himself, as *man only*, while he had another nature as God, which he reserved, and excepted out of the case. So that when he says, *I cannot do thus myself, or I am not* to be called the chief good, or *do not know this, &c.* according to them, the meaning is, I have not these perfections in my *human nature*; but yet I know and can do all unassisted, and am the chief good in my *divine nature*, which also is more properly myself. The vanity of which subterfuge I intend to lay open, by shewing how absurdly this distinction of the two natures is pretended, to take off the force of such expressions from Christ's own mouth, which, in their natural and undisguised appearance, do proclaim his inferiority to God, even the Father. And I shall dwell the more upon this, because it is the most popular and common evasion, and comes in at every turn, when all other relief fails.

It would be no unreasonable demand to ask, what intimation of any such distinction of two natures they can point us to, in any of these discourses of Christ? Why should men devise or imagine for him such a strange, and deceitful way of speaking, from no ground nor necessity, other than that of upholding their own precarious opinion? But I have several remarks to make upon this common answer.

1. That which in the first place I have to object against it is, that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, if *himself* was the supreme God in any nature of his *own*, could not have said such things, as I conceive, in any consistency with truth and sincerity, (which he always maintained strictly,) he could say himself *could not do, or did not know* the thing, which all this while *himself could do, and did know* very well, as he sure if he was the supreme God, he could and did; for this were to make him say what is most false, and to equivocate in the most deceitful manner; for though we should suppose he consisted of two infinitely distant natures, and so had two capacities of knowledge, &c., yet since himself includes them both, it follows, that the denying a thing of himself in absolute terms, without any limitation in the words or other obvious circumstances, does plainly imply a denial of its belonging to any part of his person, or any nature in it. For though we may affirm a thing of a person, which belongs only to a part of him; as I may properly say a man is wounded or hurt, though it be only in one member, suppose an arm; yet I cannot justly deny a thing of him which belongs only to one part, because it belongs not to another; as I cannot say a man is not wounded, because though one arm be shot or wounded, yet the other is whole.

For instance, I have two organs of sight, two eyes. Now suppose I converse with a man with one eye shut and the other open; if being asked whether I saw him, I should dare to say I saw him not, without any limitation,—meaning to myself, that I saw him not with the eye which was shut, though still I saw him well enough with the eye which was open,—I fear I should bear the reproach of a liar and deceiver, notwithstanding such a mental reservation as some would attribute to the holy Jesus. For knowledge is the eye of the person; Jesus Christ is supposed to have two of these knowing capacities; the one weak, the other strong and piercing, that discerns all things. Mat. xxiv. 3. Now as such an one, the disciples repair to him and ask him, when the end of the world and time of his coming shall be? He answers them, by giving them some general account of the matter, but says that the particular *day and hour* he knew not, nor did any know but the Father, meaning, say my opposers, that he knew it not with his *human knowledge*, though he knew it well enough with his *divine*, at the same time that he said, *the Son knows it not*, absolutely and indefinitely.

And yet if Jesus Christ had a divine knowledge and nature, no doubt his disciples, who, if any body, must be supposed to believe it, directed the question to that, rather than to

the imperfect human capacity; and yet in answer to it he says, he *knew not the day*, which would not be counted sincerity or truth in men, much less was Jesus Christ in danger of it; in his mouth *no guile was*; let us not impute it to him.

That you may see this is fair reasoning, hear how some of the other side own it, when out of the heat of this controversy. See Dr. Stillingfleet's sermon on Mat. x. 16. speaking of the equivocations of Roman Catholic priests, whose common answer, when examined about what they have known by confession, is, that they *know it not*, which they think to vindicate from the charge of lying by saying, that in confession, the priest knows matters as God, not as man, and therefore he denies to know them, meaning it as man. But, says the Doctor, this is absurd; because to say he does not know, is as much as to say he doth not *any way know*. Now if this be a good answer against the Roman Catholics, as no doubt it is; then sure it is so in the present case. Therefore when Christ says he *knew not the day of judgment*, it is as much as to say he does not *any way* know it, and consequently, it is a vain shift to say, it was as man only.

2. As a farther evidence, that Jesus Christ intended no such distinction of two natures, as is pretended; it is to be observed, that he puts not the distinction, or opposition between the Son of Man, and the eternal Word, as some speak, but between the *Son and his Father*, Mark xiii. 32; "Not the Son knows but only, the Father;" by which it is plain, he had no thought of including any person or nature of his own among the excepted; for whatever was not the Father, he says was ignorant of that day. Now it is certain, that in *no nature* was the Son the Father; and consequently where none but the Father knows, none, who is *not* the Father, can be intended; and since our Lord was making an exception in the case, he would not have forgotten to except the eternal Word too, if there had been such a divine principle in himself equal to the Father and distinct from him; for it is a known rule, that an exception from a general assertion confirms it, as to other instances not excepted.

Will they say, that by the Father is meant all three persons, viz. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? What, can the Father as opposed to the Son, be put for the Father and the Son? What woful work will this make with Scripture, to suppose that what are opposed to each other do include each other, under the very characters by which they are opposed? As well may they say, that in the baptismal form, by the Father is meant, Father, Son, and Spirit, though he be distinguished from the other two. And I should despair of ever understanding the Scriptures above all books that ever were written, at this rate of interpretation. No doubt, therefore, but the Father, as opposed to the Son, excludes all that is the Son; and then there could be no Son of God that knew of that day which only the Father knew of, and consequently no Son that is God equal to the Father.

3. Moreover, that interpretation must needs be unjust, which, if admitted, will make all, even the most plain speech, *uncertain*, and utterly insignificant; as this interpretation of Christ's words would do. For as I ask the patrons of this opinion, in what words Jesus Christ could in brief have denied himself to be God most high, if he had a mind to do it, more plain and full than these, in which he says, he knew not all things as the Father did, nor could do all things? So I would fain have them shew me, what words of that nature he could have used, which the same way of interpretation, as they here use, will not evade and make insignificant? For had he said, or sworn in plain words thus, viz. "I tell you I am not the supreme God, and none but my Father has that glory"; they would upon the same reason still have said, this was to be understood of him as *man only*. So that no words professing himself not to be God, could be a proof of it, if this way of interpretation be allowed. I may therefore safely say thus much, that the blessed Jesus has declared himself *not* to be the supreme God, or equal to the Father, as plainly as words could speak, or in brief express; and that this declaration made by him already, is not to be evaded any other way than what will make it impossible his mind should be understood by any words he could have designedly used in the matter. Let any one try if this do not hold true; and sure it must be an absurd way of interpretation, which leaves a man no opportunity or power of speaking his meaning plainly, so as to be understood.

4. Again, this way of interpretation, which the advocates of the opinion I oppose are so much necessitated to for upholding their cause, does plainly overthrow it again, and may be turned against themselves; for if it be just and true to deny of Christ absolutely what belongs to him in one nature, because there is another nature in which it belongs not to him; then, since to be the chief God belongs to him, according to our adversaries, only in *one nature*, and not in respect of the other, or human nature, it follows that it may as justly be said Jesus Christ is not God, nor to be worshipped or

trusted as such; nay that he was not before the Virgin Mary, according to them, and the like; and this without adding any limitation or restriction, any more than our Lord does in the place mentioned.

What would they say to one who should speak or preach so, "That Jesus is not God, that he cannot do all things, nor is equal to the Father?" Would they not conclude he was a denier of the deity of Christ, else he would never speak so unguardedly? Upon the same account, when Jesus Christ himself says, that he cannot of himself do all things, nor know all things, and makes no reserves in his words, we may conclude he also denies his being supreme God; else if it be a just way of speaking in him, it cannot be unjust in us to imitate him, by denying him indefinitely to be, what he in any one nature is not, that is, that he is *not God*, without adding more.

Nay, after this way of speaking, which they attribute to Christ, a man may be taught to say his creed backward, and yet make a true profession of his faith, by denying of Jesus Christ in absolute expressions, whatever may be denied of one of his natures. Thus since the Apostles' Creed takes notice of nothing to be believed concerning Christ, but what belongs to his *Manhood*, (which is strange, if there were any articles relating to his supreme deity, which must be most important,) one may venture to deny them all, with this secret unexpressed reserve, viz. meaning it of the divine nature, (to which they belong not.) So that one may say, I believe that Jesus Christ was not conceived of the Holy Ghost, or horn of the Virgin Mary; I believe that he never was crucified under Pontius Pilate, nor was dead or buried; that he never rose nor ascended, nor will return visibly again; for his divine nature, which it is pretended he had, was not capable of these things. And since they say, the personality is divine, here seems more warrant to be bolder in denying indefinitely of the person what belongs not to the divine nature, whose the personality is, than in so denying of the person what only belongs not to the human nature; as this interpretation makes Christ to do.

5. Finally, it weighs something with me, in opposition to this way of interpretation, that the Evangelists never take any occasion, when they had so many, to subjoin any caution against taking Christ's words in their obvious sense, when he says, "he did not know the hour," and the like. If, as we said, our Lord had no mind to reveal his divinity, though I see not still why he should deny it thus, yet sure his Apostles, who wrote so many years after, whom it concerned to reveal all important truths most clearly, would not fail to have set the reader right, by removing such obvious objections as these are against the supreme deity of Christ; and saying, he spake this only in respect of his *manhood*, that he *knew not all things*, &c. John ii. 21; xi. 13. But here is not one caution given, as often we find there was about less matters. No doubt it was because they would have the thing understood as it fairly lies, not thinking of any such secret reserve in Christ, of a divine nature in his person, to be tacitly excepted, when he had denied such perfections of his person indefinitely.

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIANITY.

A beautiful writer says, that Christianity enters the hut of the poor man, and sits down with him and his children; it makes them contented in the midst of privations, and leaves behind an everlasting blessing. It walks the cities amidst all their pomp and splendor, their imaginable pride, and their unutterable misery, a purifying, ennobling, redeeming angel. It is alike the beautiful champion of childhood, and the comforting associate of old age. It ennobles the noble, gives wisdom to the wise, and new grace to the lovely. The patriot, the minister, the poet, and eloquent man, derive sublime power from its influence.

INFLUENCE.—Every person has more or less influence. The greater the talent, the larger the wealth, the higher the office, the wider will be the influence. Remember this, and so live that your good deeds and daily example may lead to truth and virtue.

Our prosperity and happiness in life mainly depend on the principles we adopt, and the course we pursue. The path of rectitude unavoidably leads to happiness—that of vice always ends in misery.

Love to God can never be selfish. The fear of danger, the hope of reward, can never awaken it. There is but one truth that can call it forth—the truth, that God first loved us.

Dare not to judge, from one year of unhappiness, the *Eternal*, who has shown his paternal care of mankind for six thousand years, and is the same great Father of all. He who has supported, formed, and educated the human race, will not desert one, even the least. Of the smallest ephemera of a day, his providence has protected the race from Adam to us. Let your heart be tender, but your breast strong, and your struggle and hope at the same time.—*Richter.*

TO COUNTRY SUBSCRIBERS.

Complaints have reached us, from some of our Subscribers at a distance, of irregularity in the receipt of their papers. All we can say is, that the papers are regularly mailed; and if they are not forthcoming, the fault does not lie with us.

The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, MARCH, 1846.

TORONTO.

Unitarianism.—State of Religious Parties.

The following article is from the pen of a friend and brother in the faith residing at Toronto. It cannot fail to be interesting to our readers, not only on account of the intelligence it conveys respecting Unitarianism, but likewise because of the information it gives on the state of religious denominations generally, in that city:—

"The progress of the Unitarian worshiping Society in this city has surpassed our anticipations. When we look back to the position in which we stood seven months ago, we are astonished to perceive that in this short period we have passed from a state of almost hopeless insignificance into that of the most promising development. Our numbers, at that time, were not believed to exceed ten or a dozen: now we find our adherents to equal in number those of any congregation, at the same period of existence, which has ever been formed in this place; and we have knowledge of the fact that our religious opinions are gaining ground every week. Every additional Sabbath brings to our house some whom we had not before observed; and we see amongst us several whom curiosity first led to come and hear what sort of professors of the truth Unitarians are. The denunciations, which have been so freely dealt out from the pulpits of other sects, have materially served to advance our cause; for there is, in our community, as in all others, a fair proportion of that spirit of justice which prompts men to decline to condemn their fellow-men before they have given them a fair hearing. Besides, we find here, as in other places, that the very act of denouncement is often the surest means of prompting to the commission of the act forbidden. I know of some whose attendance on our worship is now regular, whose first entrance into our church was the direct consequence of a most stringent prohibition laid upon them to avoid all intercourse with our denomination.

It may not be uninteresting to your readers to learn some details of our relative position to the various religious denominations around us.

I shall begin with the Church of England, whose numerical preponderance, added to the position in society occupied by its members, entitles it to priority. We have little to say of our fellow-Christians of this body. There is a spirit of independence, and perhaps of religious liberality, so far as doctrinal distinctions are concerned, amongst its members, which keeps them tolerably free of that tendency to vituperation and uncharitable declamation which is found amongst other bodies of Christians making far higher pretensions to religious freedom. I have not heard of any instance in which we have been assailed from their pulpits; and I am very much inclined to believe that any such manifestation from their clergy would be very unpalatable to the auditors. The latter entertain very elevated conceptions of the purity of their own doctrines, and of the superior respectability of their Church: they have no aversion to the most unlimited laudation of themselves; but, at the same time, they have too much manly pride to permit of their indulging in uncalled-for depreciation of their inferiors.

The second in position are the Roman Catholics. We certainly have no complaint to make against them. Here, as in Ireland, the Catholic recognizes in his Unitarian neighbour, a friend, whose advocacy of Catholic liberty and Catholic rights has ever been uncompromising. It is a well known fact, that the Unitarian is the only professor of Protestantism who is ready to recognize in his Catholic fellow-men the great outlines of Christian character; and yet it is singular that of all believers in Divine Revelation, the Unitarian differs from the Catholic the most widely on points of speculative theology. Our pulpits never ring with those violent anathemas against Catholicism which our orthodox brethren so frequently delight to hurl. We do not choose to declare the Roman Catholic to be an idolater, and the temporal head of his Church, Antichrist,