

SCRIPTURAL REASONS
for Disbelieving
THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

We draw from the Sacred Volume the following reasons for rejecting the Doctrine of the Trinity :

I. The terms which are necessary to the very statement of the doctrine, and which cannot well be avoided by those who hold it, are not found in Scripture. The words Trinity—trium—Jehovah Jesus—God—man—are not in the Scripture. We nowhere find the expression *God the Son*, but always the *Son of God*; nowhere *God the Holy Spirit*, but the *Spirit of God*, or the *Holy Spirit*. The expressions first person, second person, third person, three persons, are not found. Now if the very words, which are necessary to express the doctrine, are not in the Scriptures, how can we suppose the doctrine itself to be there? If the sacred writers meant to teach this doctrine, how is it possible they should not sometimes have used the words which are used in regard to it?

II. The doctrine of the Trinity is nowhere stated in express terms, while that of the *sole divinity of the Father* is taught in language the most explicit and direct. There are only three texts which speak of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in formal connexion; and neither of these declares them to be three equal persons in the Divinity. How is this possible if the doctrine were true? that the Apostles should never name them together but three times, and then not speak of their being one God?

Indeed I am wrong, to say three texts; there are only two; for one of the three passages to which I referred is well known to be no part of the Bible—viz. 1 John v. 7. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." This verse, every body knows, was never written by St. John, but has been added to this epistle since his day. John wrote in Greek; but the old manuscripts of the Greek Testament do not contain it. It is found only in the Latin. It has therefore, no right to a place in the New Testament, and ought to be rejected. It is rejected by all impartial scholars of every denomination, who have inquired concerning it. There are, therefore, only two texts which formally name the Father, Son, and Spirit, in connexion.

The first is the form of Baptism, (Matthew xxviii. 19) "Baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Here the three are placed in connexion. But observe the mode of expression. Does it say, that they are three persons?—No: it does not say that they are persons at all. Does it assert, that they constitute one God?—No. Does it say that each is God?—No such thing. Does it say that they are all equal?—No such thing. Does it say they are all to be worshipped? No. Then it does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity. If it neither declares them to be three persons, nor equal to each other, nor each to be God, nor each to be worshipped, then it does not teach the doctrine in question.

The same is true of the other text, (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." It is not here said that each is God, nor that all are equal, nor that all are to be worshipped, nor that all together constitute one. Therefore it does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity. Nay, it virtually denies it. For as you observe, it does not speak of the *Father, Son, and Spirit*; but of *Jesus Christ, and God, and the Holy Spirit*. Observe the difference, and consider what it implies. Would a Trinitarian express himself in these words and in this order, when intending to express his doctrine? If it were *Father, Son, and Spirit*, we should of course regard them as three, and not one, unless expressly instructed to the contrary; how much more where the words run, *Jesus Christ—and God—and the Holy Spirit*. So that there is only one text which unites the terms *Father, Son, and Spirit*; and that one says nothing of the doctrine of the Trinity. Now I ask seriously, if it had been intended to teach that doctrine, is it possible that this should be the case?

It is thus plain, that this doctrine is nowhere taught in express terms. You then say, it is perhaps taught indirectly and by necessary implication. I answer, it is impossible this should be, because the doctrine that *the Father alone is God* is taught in the most direct and absolute terms that language will admit: so as positively to put out of the question every other doctrine, and to take away the liberty of inferring any other from indirect expressions. That this is so, may be seen at once from a few plain and explicit texts, which seem to be perfectly decisive.

(1) John xvii. 3. "This is life eternal, that they might know *Thee, the only true God—and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*" This is the language of our Lord himself in prayer. Now that he was at prayer proves that he himself could not be God; for God never prays. But, besides this, he strongly asserts, that the Father *only* is God. It could not be asserted more strongly.

(2) Mark xiii. 32. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven; *neither the Son; but the Father.*" This is the language of our Lord. He declares that he does not know the time of that day and hour; that the Father only knows. Therefore the Father only can be God; for God knows all things.

(3) 1 Timothy ii. 5. "There is one God—and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."—What can assert more positively than this, that Jesus is not the one God?

(4) 1 Cor. viii. 6. "But to us there is but *One God, the Father*, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and *one Lord, Jesus Christ*, by whom are all things, and we by him."—This text is very positive. It declares that Jesus is our Lord, but that the Father only is our God. Can language be devised which shall declare it more positively?

(5) Ephesians iv. 5, 6. "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." What can the Apostle mean by this separation of our Lord, from the one God and Father of all, if it do not intimate the Father's complete and unrivalled supremacy? What words can speak it, if such words as these mean anything else?

Ask you then, seriously—in the fear and presence of Almighty God, and in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord—if these five positive explicit assertions that the Father only is God, ought not to set the question at rest in our minds? While we have these plain and intelligible declarations of the divine word—which never have been, and never can be, made consistent with the doctrine of three equal persons in the Godhead—ought we to be turned from our faith by any arguments which might be drawn from more obscure passages? Ought we to take up the opposite doctrine, because it may be ingeniously inferred from difficult and controverted texts? Are we not bound by these plain declarations? And, while they stand in our Bibles, uncontroverted and unrefuted, shall it be said that we reject the testimony of God, and depart from the oracles of truth? For myself, so long as the glorious doctrine of the Divine Unity is built up on these *Five Sacred Pillars*, I must confide in it as the truth of God. If the Holy Oracle can announce any truth plainly and unequivocally, it has so announced this. To my ear it speaks in language the most unambiguous and the least susceptible of perversion. While I abide by it in these plain texts, I know what I believe; I have the sure word of truth. If I forsake these for the sake of reasoning out another doctrine from more difficult passages, I am not sure that my reason may not deceive me in the process, and lead me to wrong conclusions. I am safer, therefore, to abide by the testimony inscribed on these *Five Pillars*, which I can read as I run.

III. As these fundamental texts most plainly teach the Supremacy of the Father, so there are equally decisive texts respecting the character and offices of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, which go to confirm it. Let us attend to these.

(1) Let us consider, first, the language which is commonly used respecting our Lord Jesus. Is it such as implies that he is the same with Almighty God? Take his testimony respecting himself. "I came not to do mine own will." "I can of myself do nothing." "The Son can do nothing of himself." "The Father that is in me, he doth the works."—He calls himself, "He whom the Father hath sanctified and sent." He says, "I am come in my Father's name." And after his resurrection he says, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."—Ponder these expressions; weigh these words: and say whether they be the words of one who would represent himself as the independent God.

Take the testimony of the Apostles. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, by signs and wonders which God did by him." "Appointed to be a Prince and Saviour."—"at the right hand of God exalted"—"made both Lord and Christ." Because of his obedience unto death, "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name." In the end he shall "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all." Weigh these expressions deliberately, and consider whether it be possible that they should be constantly used concerning Almighty God. But such as these are applied to Jesus, in every part of the New Testament.

Consider the terms of faith in him which were required of his disciples. Were they such as implied his supreme divinity? Remember the confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God:" and

with this, Jesus was satisfied. Remember the confession of Martha, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God;" and he required no more. Remember the reason which John gives for writing his Gospel. "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Who does John say is born of God? "Whoso believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." Who does he say overcomes the world? "He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." What was the preaching of the Apostles? Look through the book of Acts, and you will find the burden of it to be, "Reasoning from the Scriptures, and testifying that Jesus is the Christ." Now, is it possible, that in all which is thus said of the necessity and value of faith in Jesus, when believers were to be received into the church, and their immortal interests were depending—is it possible, that they should not have been required to believe him the Almighty God, if he were so? Would he and the Apostles have so solemnly assured them, that faith in him as the *Son of God* was sufficient, if in truth he had been the eternal God?

2. The same conclusion may be as decisively drawn from the language perpetually used respecting the *Holy Spirit*—language wholly inconsistent with the idea of a divine person distinct from the Father, and equal with him. The Spirit is said to be *poured out—shed—given—given without measure*; men are said to be *baptized* with it, *filled* with it, to *partake* of it. But this cannot be said of a person. It signifies evidently a divine influence; and that may descend from the person of the Father, as well as from some distinct person. God does not become another person, because he gives his spirit to men. When Paul visited Ephesus, he found certain Christians there, and asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost. They answered, *We have no so much as heard whether here be any Holy Ghost*. How is this? The Holy Ghost a person in the Godhead, equal with the Father, and essential to salvation to know him, and yet these disciples never heard of him! Impossible—and therefore impossible that it should be a third person in the Deity distinct from the Father, and equal in power and glory. No—the holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. Paul tells us what it is, when he says, "As no man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him; so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God." The spirit of God is God himself, just as the spirit of a man is the man himself, and not a separate person. And thus the single supremacy of the Father remains unaffected.

3. There are also many expressions respecting *Jesus and the holy Spirit* in connexion with each other, which confirm the evidence that the Father alone is God. It will be sufficient to cite these without comment; since the mere reading of them will show how utterly irreconcilable they are with the idea of three persons, alike equal and supreme. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Spirit and with power." "Jesus received of the Father the promise of the holy Ghost." "God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him." "He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the spirit that dwelleth in you." Consider what each of these passages must mean if the doctrine of the Trinity be true, and you will perceive them to be utterly irreconcilable with it.

IV. Thus far we have looked at the testimony of Scripture, as exhibited in particular classes of texts. We may now turn to some considerations drawn from the general style of the New Testament. Here we shall find that the doctrine of the Divine Unity so pervades and gives a complexion to the New Testament, that if we could conceive the doctrine of the Trinity to be true, it would alter the complexion of the whole. It would not be such as it is, if that doctrine were true.

This might be illustrated from the devotional character of the New Testament, in which we find that the Apostles employed no expressions intimating that they worshipped God in three persons; but, on the contrary, went on in the worship of *the one God* as before their conversion—from the conduct of the disciples towards their Lord; for they never treated him as if they believed him to be the Supreme Being;—from the conduct of the Jews towards him and towards them; for, even on his trial for blasphemy, they never accused him of teaching his own divinity; but only of saying, that he could raise up the temple in three days; nor did they ever assert, that the disciples taught a doctrine which they would have regarded as so monstrous and abominable;—and from the controversies which arose in that age; wherein we find not a single answer to any objection urged against the doctrine of the Trinity; and yet no doctrine was so likely to call forth objections; there is none against which both Jews and Gentiles would have so strenuously protested.

From all these circumstances we argue, that the doctrine of the Trinity was not known in the days of the Apostles; and, therefore, that it is not true.—Rev. H. Ware.

TABLE EXHIBITING AT ONE VIEW THE NUMBER OF INSTANCES IN THE SEVERAL BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, IN WHICH THE APPELLATION GOD IS APPLIED TO THE ALMIGHTY, AND TO HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.

ACCORDING TO THE AUTHORIZED VERSION, THE WORD GOD IS APPLIED

In the following Books.	To a Being distinct from Christ.		To Christ himself.		In the singular or plural, to Gods or Heavens.
	Times.	Times.	Times.	Times.	
Matthew	55	1			
Mark	52				
Luke	124 & 1 s.				1 pr.
John	81 & 1 s.	1 al.	2		
Acts	166 & 2 s.	1 s.			8
Romans	160 & 1 s.	1 al.			1
1 Corin.	106 & 1 s.				3
2 Corin.	74				1
Galatians	31				1
Ephes.	32				
Philipp.	22				1
Coloss.	22				
1 Thess.	37 & 1 s.				1
2 Thess.	18				1
1 Tim.	21	1 al.			
2 Tim.	14 & 1 s.				
Titus	12 or 13	1 am.			
Philemon	2				
Hebrews	70 & 1 s.	1			
James	17				
1 Peter	39 & 1 s.				
2 Peter	6 or 7.	1 am.			
1 John	62 or 63	1 s.			
2 John	4				
3 John	2				
Jude	5				
Revela.	98				
TOTAL	1326	13*	3†	6‡	13§

* MARKS.—s. denotes supplied; pr. probably; al. alleged; am. ambiguous.

† Matt. i. 23. John i. 1; x. 33; xx. 28. Acts vii. 59; xx. 28. Rom. ix. 5. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Titus ii. 13. Heb. i. 8. 2 Peter i. 1. 1 John iii. 16; v. 20. 1 John x. 34. 35. 2 Thess. ii. 4. Luke ii. 40. Rom. i. 16. 1 Cor. i. 18. 24. 2. 1 Thess. iv. 16.—There are probably several other instances in which the word *God* is used in the Christian Scriptures as an epithet denoting intensity, power, or excellence. ‡ Acts vi. 40. 43; xii. 22; xiv. 11; xvii. 18. 23; xix. 27; xxviii. 6. 1 Cor. vii. 5. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Gal. iv. 8. Phil. iii. 19.

§ Had the Table been constructed from any other reputable version of the New Testament, it would have differed in several of the particulars, and been probably more correct. The important inference, however, should have remained the same; namely, that *one divine person, THE FATHER*, is generally distinguished by the title *God*, from all other persons or beings in the universe.—Wilson's Scripture Proofs.

The Bible Christian.

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SETTLED OPINIONS.

On some topics we may be innocently indifferent. But with others it is not so. When the subject is of exalted importance to ourselves—intimately connected with grave questions of faith and morals—we are bound to give it reasonable, and reverent attention. We claim for religion the highest place in man's consideration. It is closely linked with his highest hopes and deepest fears. It is his monitor with regard to present duty, his instructor respecting future destiny.

In religion, as we understand it, there are three great leading ideas—God, Christ, and man;—God the Author of all, the Father and Ruler of mankind,—Christ his Son, the revealer of his will and the messenger of his mercy,—and man, the creature of his hands, the object of his care, and the subject of his moral government. Various and manifold have been the opinions which have been asserted and maintained from time to time concerning God, and Christ, and man. What they are in themselves—what their nature and attributes—what the nature of the relations they severally sustain to one another—these have been topics of discussion and disputation from very early ages of Christianity. With regard to God, the questions raised have been,—how does He exist, in one person only, or in three persons? How does He govern his creatures? Does He occupy the throne of the universe as a stern unbending Judge; or does he occupy that exalted seat as a tender and merciful Parent. In other words, will He forgive transgression, or can He forgive transgression, without satisfaction having been made to His offended justice? or will He, and can He pardon the sinner who turns to him and repents, and enters on a