

as a subject upon which there was no question. Instead of an elaborate train of reasoning in proof of the existence of the divine Being, we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Thus the Deity is set before us in all the glory of His creating power, and we are taught our relation to Him as His creatures, and as His offspring. This relation to the divine Being is the foundation of our trust in Him as our preserver and support; and the reason of our love to Him and our obedience to His will. It is also the ground of our hope in His mercy.

#### STYLE OF SCRIPTURE CONCERNING THE DIVINE EXISTENCE.

The Scriptures, which place the divine Being before us as our Father and our hope, speak of Him in language which is peculiar. The word translated God is in the plural form—literally, "In the beginning Gods created the heavens and the earth." The conjunction of a plural noun with a verb which is in the singular, is at variance with the rules of grammar, and must, therefore be understood to indicate something special or peculiar in the subject. Again, in Deuteronomy vi. 4, we read, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord"—literally and strictly, "Jehovah our Gods is one Jehovah"—clearly shewing a plurality of persons or subsistences in one single essence. In conformity with this representation, we read of the first person as Jehovah representing the whole Godhead. Then again we read of the second as the Malak Jehovah (Gen. xvi. 7, 9, 10, 11); Angel Jehovah; Angel Redeemer (chap. xviii. 16); Angel of the Presence (Isaiah lxiii. 9); Angel of the Counsel (chap. ix. 6); and Angel of the Covenant (Mal. iii. 1); Daber Jehovah (Gen. xv. 1). And in contradistinction from these we read of the Ruach Jehovah, or Spirit Jehovah (Isaiah lxi. 1). These passages can only be understood by admitting a plurality of persons in one undivided essence.

Another class of passages exhibit the same truth. We read, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become like one of us." "Let us go down" (Gen. i. 26; iii. 22; xii. 7). "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" These passages, like those above, present us with a plurality in unity.

A third class of passages may be noticed. "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there *am* I; and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me." Who is the person here sent? He describes himself as the first and the last, who laid the foundations of the earth, and whose right hand spanned the heavens, the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel (Isaiah xlvi. 16, 12, 13, 17). "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. For behold I will shake my hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee" (Zech. ii. 8-11). In these passages we read of one Lord of Hosts, or, as the Hebrew reads, Jehovah of Hosts, being sent by Jehovah of Hosts. This is in keeping with Gen. xix. 24: "Then the Jehovah rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Jehovah out of heaven." These last two passages shew us a duality in the Godhead; the