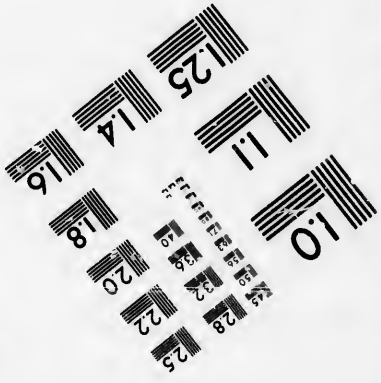
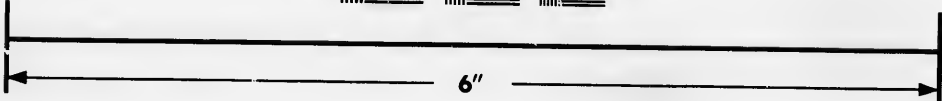
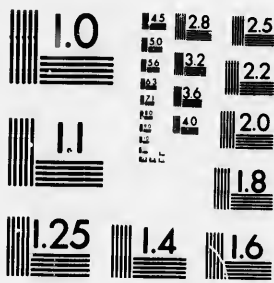


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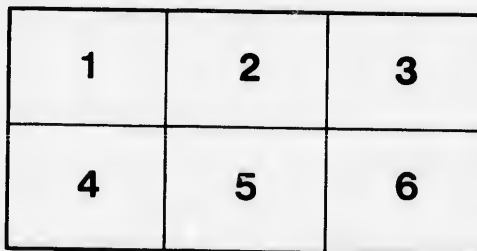
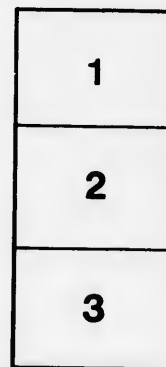
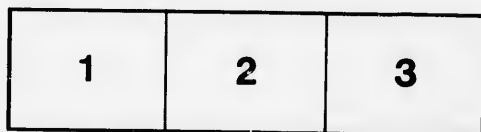
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THE  
DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

UNDERLYING THE  
REVELATION OF REDEMPTION.

BY THE  
REV. GEORGE PATTERSON,  
PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, GREENHILL, PICTOU, N.S.;  
AUTHOR OF 'MEMOIR OF JAMES M'GREGOR, D.D.,' 'LIVES OF  
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## PREFACE.

---

THE circumstances in which the following treatise originated may be briefly stated. In the course of the writer's study of the Scriptures, for personal improvement or pulpit preparation, he had observed passages which, though not directly teaching the doctrine of the Trinity, and not usually quoted in discussions on that subject, yet afforded incidental evidence of its truth, by the manner in which they recognised the existence and operation of three divine persons in our salvation. When, therefore, during the past winter, he was invited to deliver one of a course of lectures to the students attending the Presbyterian College, Halifax, he thought, after some consultation with brethren, that it might be useful to 'the young men, the sons of the prophets,' to collect and examine a number of these passages, and thus show how the

doctrine of the Trinity was assumed throughout the Scriptures. This led him into a fuller examination of the subject; and, in prosecuting his investigations, he found the field much wider than he had conceived, so that he was able to traverse only a portion of it in the lecture which he delivered as one of the course referred to. A desire having been expressed by parties who heard it read, that he should complete the course of inquiry on which he had entered, he has rewritten and enlarged what he had then prepared, and cast it into the form of a systematic treatise, which he now ventures to lay upon the altar as a humble offering to the cause of Christian truth.

In the preparation of his work, he has consulted all the commentaries and theological works bearing on the subject within his reach; but, he must say, commonly with small results for the immediate object he had in view. The path he has traversed, though indicated by other writers, has not, so far as he is aware, been fully explored by any. He has thus been left to prosecute his researches with the aid, in his particular line of inquiry, only of occasional hints from authors who wrote for other

purposes. He must, however, acknowledge special obligations to the New Testaments of Webster and Wilkinson, Alford and Wordsworth; to the commentaries of Eadie, Ellicott, Hodge, Alexander, Lange, Olshausen, Hengstenberg, Keil and Delitzsch; to Liddon's Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of our Lord; and in a less degree to others, whom he cannot more particularly specify.

He cannot but feel as if he were guilty of presumption in offering any new discussion on a subject which has employed the tongues and pens of so many of the greatest minds in the Church during long centuries. But he knows of no work in which the line of thought he has adopted is fully followed out; and the decided opinion of friends, on whose judgment he relies, that the work was fitted to be useful, has finally determined him to offer to the Christian public this his first published attempt at theological inquiry. Grateful and happy will he be if he should prove the means of bringing to light, from the inexhaustible mines of God's word, some hid treasure which may serve to adorn the temple of truth, and enrich the experience of God's children. At all events, he has the satisfaction of good Bishop

Horne regarding his Commentary on the Psalms, that the work has been its own reward. Most devoutly does he bless God for the impressions made on his mind and heart, by the close examination of the Scriptures to which he has been led in the preparation of these pages.

May his service for Jerusalem be accepted of the saints; and, above all, may the God of all grace render it subservient to the united yet distinctive glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!

GEORGE PATTERSON.

GREENHILL, PICTOU, N.S.,

*April 1870.*

## INTRODUCTORY.

---

**T**HE doctrine of the Trinity is one of the truths most surely believed among us. Everywhere and at all times the Church of Christ has with one heart believed, and with one mouth confessed, that in the one undivided Godhead there are three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the same in essence, equal in power and glory. The rise of heresies on the subject, while obliging her to define the doctrine more sharply, has led her at the same time to appreciate it more highly; and thus the storms of discussion which they have evoked, have ended in rooting it more firmly in the faith and the affections of the children of God.

Nor has the earnestness with which she has contended for this truth been beyond its importance. It can only be to the grossest ignorance, or the most superficial inquiry, that it can ever appear a doctrine of mere abstract speculation, and having but a slight connection with man's duties or his hopes.

According to the word of God, the whole system of divine administration throughout the universe is founded on it. Even in regard to the natural world, the Scriptures do not simply recognise God absolutely, but ascribe to each of the three persons in the Godhead their respective offices in its creation and order, its preservation and government, representing the Father as the source, the Son as the channel, and the Spirit as the agent in all divine works.<sup>1</sup> As Calvin expresses it: 'To the Father is to be ascribed the origin of working, and the source and fountain of all things; to the Son, wisdom, counsel, and the administration; but to the Spirit, the efficiency in operation.'<sup>2</sup>

It is, however, in the arrangements and issues of the economy of our salvation that this doctrine appears especially luminous. In that glorious scheme each of the Three is represented as discharging His appropriate office, and performing His distinctive work; but the order of operation among them is in accordance with the original order of subsistence between them from eternity, and the relation in

<sup>1</sup> See, among many others, such passages as Gen. i. 1, 2; Job xxvii. 3, xxxiii. 4; Ps. civ. 29, 30; John i. 3; Col. i. 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> 'Patri principium agendi, rerumque omnium fons et scaturigo attribuitur; Filio sapientia, consilium, ipsaque in rebus agendis dispensatio, at Spiritui virtus et efficacia assignatur actionis.'—*Inst.* i. xiii. 18.

which they stand to man and to each other, in the work of redemption, is based upon the personal and internal relation of the members of the Godhead each to the other. The Father is represented as sending the Son, and throughout the whole sustaining the honours of Deity, both in maintaining its prerogatives and bestowing its favours; but this is based upon His original relation to the others, as the *Fons Trinitatis*, the eternal fountain of the Triune Godhead. The Son is exhibited as sent by the Father, commissioned by Him, and doing His will in redeeming lost sinners by His humiliation and death; but in so doing He acts according to His original relation of Sonship to the Father. And then, as the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, He is represented as sent forth by the Father and the Son to complete the work in the world, by revealing the infinite love of the Father, the infinite grace of the Son, and the condescension of the Spirit, by quickening the spiritually dead to newness of life, and by carrying on the work both in the individual soul and in the Church at large, till they arrive at 'the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

Lying thus at the basis of redemption, every doctrine of the Christian salvation is closely connected with it, and rests upon it as its foundation. By it, too, must our duties to the Supreme be determined.



As Bishop Waterland remarks: 'If God be *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, the duties owing to God will be duties under that triune distinction, which must be paid accordingly; and whoever leaves any of the three out of his idea of God, comes so far short of honouring God *perfectly*, and of serving Him in proportion to the manifestation made of Him. Supposing our doctrine true, there will be duties proper to be paid to the Father as Father, and to the Son as Son, and to the Holy Ghost as the Eternal Spirit of both; duties correspondent to their distinct offices and personalities, besides the duties common to all three considered as one God.' Hence all our obligations are exhibited by our being baptized 'into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'

But if this doctrine thus determines our duties, so does it establish our hopes. Were it not true, there were no Son to redeem us; the love of the Father must have remained 'a fountain sealed,' its purposes unexecuted, there being no Eternal Word to say, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will.' Were this doctrine not true, there were no Eternal Spirit, to enter into communion with our spirits, to form in them a new principle of life, and to transform them into the image of God. In a word, there were no salvation for the lost.

And if all our hopes are thus grounded on this truth, so by it alone is their extent and glory measured; for all the fulness of blessing to which the saved are to attain, is summed up in our enjoying the completeness of divine working, in the manifestation of each of the three Persons in the Godhead, in His special grace for man's well-being. 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.'

This being the position which the doctrine holds in the Christian system, it will always be worthy of our attentive study, both as Christians and theologians, that by acquaintance with its evidence, we may be established in our convictions of its truth; that by clear and accurate conceptions, we may be preserved from error; and that by the study of its bearings, we may be able to apply it for our profit and salvation. Indeed, in every age the remark of Augustine will be justified, that 'nowhere is error more dangerous, investigation more difficult, or discovery more fruitful.'<sup>1</sup>

The positive Scripture testimony in favour of this doctrine may be summed up as follows:—The Scriptures frequently and strongly assert that God is one.

<sup>1</sup> Nec periculosius alicubi erratur, nec laboriosius aliquid quæretur, nec fructuosius aliquid invenitur.—*De Trinitate*, i. 3.

But, at the same time, they in a large number of places, besides the Father, represent the Lord Jesus Christ as God, by ascribing to Him divine names, divine titles, divine attributes, and divine works, and by rendering to Him divine worship. So in like manner do they represent the Holy Ghost as a divine person. And then, while thus each individually is God, the three are combined in a manner implying equality, as in the baptismal formula and the apostolic benediction.

The evidence we regard as overwhelming in amount, and irrefragable in character. And yet to it may be added much evidence of an incidental nature—less direct, but scarcely less convincing. Liddon, in his Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of our Lord, remarks regarding the writings of Paul: ‘It would be a considerable error to recognise the doctrine of our Lord’s divinity only in those passages of St. Paul’s writings which distinctly assert it. The indirect evidence of the apostle’s hold upon the doctrine, is much wider and deeper than to admit of its being exhibited in a given number of isolated texts; since the doctrine colours, underlies, interpenetrates the most characteristic features of his thought and teaching. The proof of this might be extended almost indefinitely.’ Accordingly, the writer has built up one of the most solid defences

of the truth of our Lord's divinity in our language, not merely by adducing direct proofs of the doctrine, but by showing how it is interwoven with the whole texture of the sacred writings. In thus establishing the divinity of the Son, the main position in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity is gained. Similar testimony as to the Holy Ghost might be adduced; and we have only, as before, to combine these two facts with what the Scriptures teach regarding the unity of God, to arrive at the full idea of the Trinity.

But a close examination of the word of God will not only enable us by this process to arrive at the doctrine of the Tri-personality of God, but also afford us a large amount of incidental evidence of the same kind directly in favour of the doctrine, and enable us to establish it by the shorter process of showing how it is assumed in the exhibitions which Scripture has given of the plan of mercy for fallen man. This redemption is the central subject of revelation; and just as it is unfolded, so, we believe, there will be found taken for granted the distinct personality of the three members of the Godhead, and their concurrent yet distinctive action in the economy of man's salvation. This is the point to which our inquiries will be directed in the present treatise.

Taking a general view of the word of God, we may observe on the face of it, that it may be divided into three parts, distinct in their character, and having a relation to each of the three persons in the Godhead respectively, in the order of their subsistence and operation. Even from a cursory view of the Old Testament, every intelligent reader must have been struck with the fact that its leading principle throughout is the unity of God. 'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God, one Jehovah,' was proclaimed to God's chosen as a sort of oracular announcement of the essential basis of their religious faith and national polity. Their separation from the other nations of the earth was in order to their being a standing protest against the various systems of polytheism prevalent around. Their legislation, for the proclamation of which the 'Almighty bowed the heavens and came down,' had as a first design to guard that fundamental law of their civil and ecclesiastical constitution, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.' The providential dealings of God with them as a nation through long ages, and with other nations in relation to them, as related in their sacred records, all bore upon the one object of proclaiming Him as the Most High, who ruleth among the children of men, and who will not give His glory to another. All their sacred writings are redolent of

the same truth. In them God is everywhere seen proclaiming, in word and deed, against the gods many of the heathen: 'I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me;' and against every form of dualism, which would recognise two independent principles of good and evil: 'I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.' To exhibit His incomparable excellences they regard as their appropriate function and their especial glory, so that their pervading spirit may be expressed in the words of the Psalmist, 'Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?' If they speak of the natural world,—and nowhere have we such magnificent descriptions of the glories of the heavens and the earth,—it is only as the handiwork of God, and as telling of His perfections. Even when they speak of a coming redemption, it is as God's great work in which He is to be glorified. If they speak of a coming Deliverer distinct from the Father, it is as His righteous servant—His agent in accomplishing the work. So that, on every subject and in every variety of form, their teaching concentrates upon the honour of the one living and true God; while Inspiration reaches an elevation, beyond which human

thought and human language can never soar, in the utterances of prophets and of the sweet singers of Israel, as they describe His undivided supremacy in heaven and earth, His infinite perfections, and His unrivalled glories. But what is all this but the manifestation of the Father in His office, as representing God absolutely, and upholding the honours of Deity? So that the whole teaching of the Old Testament centres in the principle of the apostle, that 'there is but one God, THE FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in Him' (1 Cor. viii. 6).

It is scarcely necessary to point out that the second portion of revelation, which includes the Gospels, is the manifestation of THE SON in His special department of the work of our redemption. This forms the whole subject of these delightful portions of the word of God. They commence with His incarnation, and, after exhibiting His divine life and teaching, close with His death, resurrection, and ascension; so that, in a peculiar sense, He is their Alpha and their Omega, their beginning and their ending.

But equally apparent is the fact, that the remaining portion of the word of God is specially the manifestation of the Holy Ghost. It commences with an account of the outpouring of His influences, by which the new creation was established,

and a history of His early working in the progress and extension of the Church then founded. The Epistles which follow, were not only written under His inspiration, but are all related to that work which He was carrying on in the world, and contain His instructions for the guidance, to the latest ages, of that holy society which He had founded; while the closing book of the canon exhibits, in mysterious symbols, the vicissitudes of His Church on all her voyages over the stormy sea of time, till she reaches the eternal haven. If in these writings we have the Son's work in all its bearings more fully unfolded than in the previous portions of Revelation, it is still by the Spirit that this is done, as part of His distinctive work, according to the saying of our Saviour, 'He shall testify of me.' 'He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.'

From this brief review it will be seen that the whole word of God naturally divides into three parts, clustering round the three persons in the Godhead respectively; and thus the doctrine of the Trinity actually underlies the whole revelation of God's purpose of grace to man.

But on examining each of these portions separately, not only does it exhibit the special glories of one of the persons in the Trinity, but it presents



Him in His relation to the others, both essentially and economically ; and it will now be our object, taking up each of these in order, to show that just as they unfold the plan of redemption, the working of a Triune God will be found at its foundation. In prosecuting our inquiries, we shall limit ourselves to the consideration of passages in which the three Divine Persons are mentioned in connection with the formation and execution of the scheme of human salvation. It will be understood that, in so doing, we leave out of view all that might be deduced from representations given of the nature and work of any of the persons of the Godhead singly, or even of two of them in connection, not because we regard these as unimportant, but because it is necessary, in present circumstances, to confine ourselves to a single view of the subject. The order we shall pursue will be the historical, considering the sacred writings mainly according to the time of their production.

Before entering upon our inquiry, it may be proper to make an explanation, to guard against misapprehension. We shall have occasion to speak of the proper work of each of the three persons of the Godhead in our salvation ; but we must beware of any such idea, as that any act of the Godhead should be the act of one without the concurrence of the others.

Sometimes there is an indistinct notion on the part of Christians, as if the Father did some works, the Son did some, and the Spirit did others, each working separately from the others ; and language has been used by evangelical writers on the subject, which is incautious and dangerous. The tendency of such a view is inevitably to Tritheism. All sound divines hold that, as the nature of the Godhead is one and undivided, so all the works of the Trinity are undivided, and that in every divine act all three co-operate, according to the old Latin maxim, *Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*. The works of the Trinity, external to themselves, are undivided. We notice this to guard against wrong impressions ; but it still remains true that, in all divine operations, while all three concur, distinct places of working are assigned to each.



PART I.



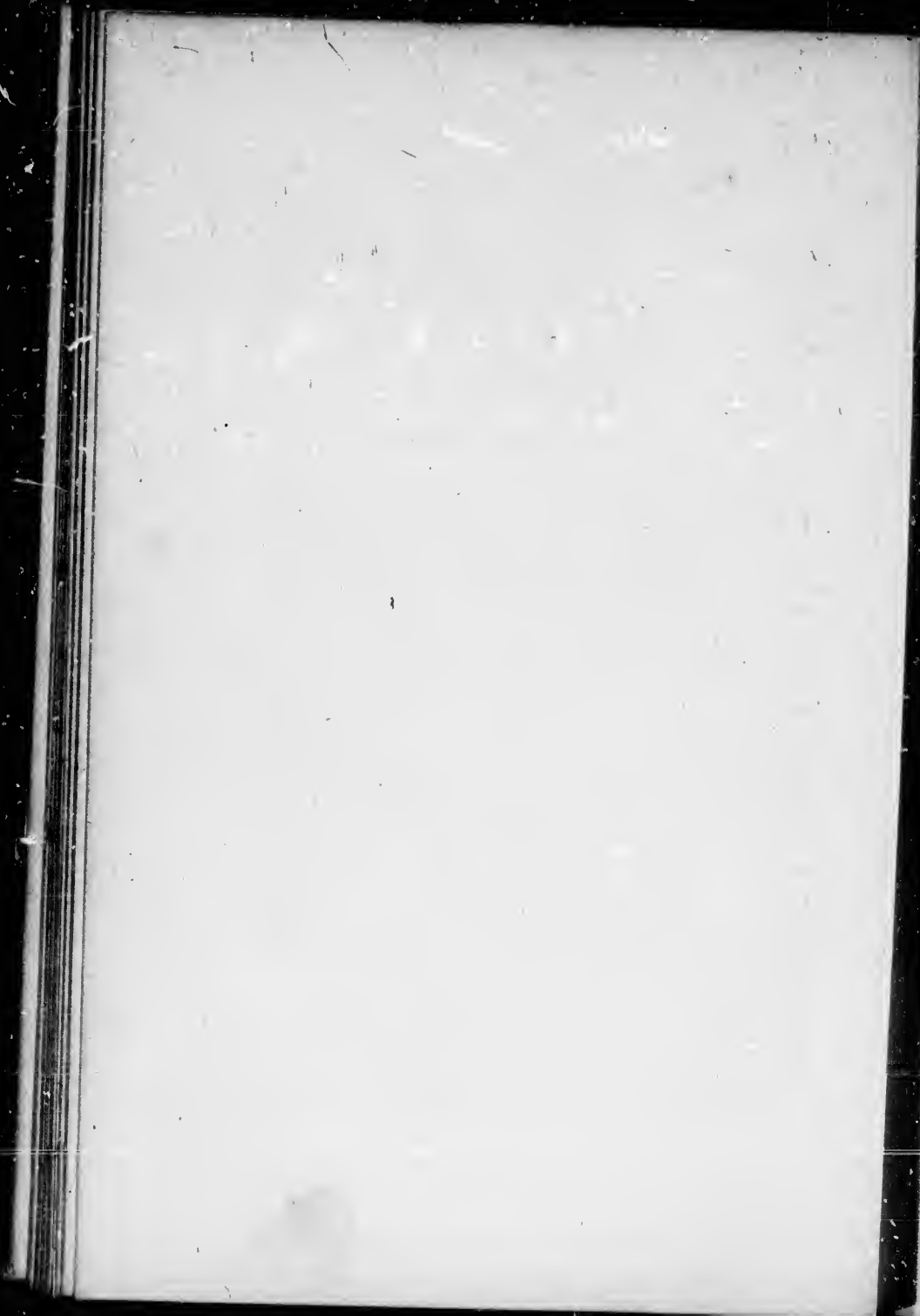
THE OLD TESTAMENT;

OR,

THE REVELATION OF THE FATHER.

---

*'To us there is but one God, THE FATHER, of whom are all things,  
and we in Him.'*—1 COR. VIII. 6.



## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY INDICATIONS OF A TRINITY.

**O**N entering upon our examination of the Old Testament we must observe that, as already remarked, the primary design of that dispensation was to establish among men the doctrine of one living and true God, in opposition to all the forms of polytheism prevalent among the nations, or, in other words, to reveal the Father; and, therefore, that any allusions in its records to any distinction of personality in the Godhead should be few, and, as compared with later revelations, indistinct, is only what we would have a right to expect. One of the Fathers well remarks, that a gradual revealing of God was necessary in consequence of human frailty, just as the gradual progress of the light of day is necessary to the human eye, which, after the darkness of night, and unaccustomed to the light of the sun, would be blinded by the sudden outflashing of his noontide power.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the redemption

<sup>1</sup> Gradatim enim et per incrementa fragilitas humana nutiri

afterward to be achieved, was only dimly revealed, through obscure prophecies and veiled symbols, to the faith and hope of the expecting Church. This was the case more especially in the earlier periods of that economy. The revelation of the working of a Triune God in the arrangements of mercy for man's salvation must have been proportionally obscure.

But on closer examination we believe that it will be manifest, that in the very earliest communications of God's will, there were clear indications of a plurality of persons in the one divine essence, and less distinct indications of a Trinity; that as the light of revelation advanced toward the perfect day, the intimations of tri-personality became more distinct; and that when it reached what may be regarded as its noonday brightness under that dispensation, in the writings of the prophets from the reign of Uzziah to the close of the Hebrew canon in the days of Malachi, the three divine persons are prominently exhibited, and that in connection with the approaching redemption, in a manner which almost anticipates the clearness of New Testament revelation.

debet . . . periculosa enim sunt quæ magna sunt, si repentina sunt. Nam etiam lux solis subita post tenebras splendore nimio insuetis oculis non ostendet diem, sed potius faciet cæcitatem.—NOVATIAN, *De Trin.* c. xxvi., quoted by Liddon.

Looking, then, at this revelation in its earlier periods, we find at the outset the singular circumstance of the title of God in the original being plural, but joined with a singular verb. This is the case in the very first verse of Genesis, 'In the beginning God (*Elohim* in the plural) created the heavens and the earth.' 'Language,' says Liddon, 'it would seem, thus submits to a violent anomaly, that she may the better hint at the mystery of several powers or persons, who not merely act together, but who constitute a single agent. The Hebrew language could have described God by singular forms, such as *El*, *Eloah*, and no question would have been raised as to the strictly monotheistic force of those words. The Hebrew language might have "amplified" the idea of God thus conveyed, by less dangerous processes than the employment of a plural form. Would it not have done so, unless the plural form had been really necessary, in order to hint at the complex mystery of God's inner life, until that mystery should be more clearly unveiled by the explicit revelations of a later day?'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The singular term *Eloah* is sometimes used to denote God, but most commonly the Hebrew Scriptures employ the plural form *Elohim*. This is used to denote (1) The true God; (2) Heathen gods, Ex. xii. 12; Gen. xxxv. 2, 4; Josh. xxiv. 15, etc.; (3) Judges or magistrates, as under the Jewish theocracy representing God, Ps. lxxxiii. 1, 6; Ex. xxi. 6, xxii. 7, 8. (In Deut. xix. 17, in a



All attempts to explain this away, as the plural of majesty, are refuted by the language of other passages, which clearly imply a plurality of persons. Thus in Gen. i. 26 it is said, 'And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' Here the persons are plural, but the likeness is one, pointing to personal distinctions in one undivided essence. Again, it is said in reference to the building of the tower of Babel (ch. xi. 7), 'Jehovah said, Go to, let us go down;' and still more expressively it is said of man, after he had fallen (ch. iii. 22), 'The Lord God said, The man is become as one of us;' in all of which passages the language implies distinction of persons and equality of rank between the speaker and those addressed.

Some writers, however, consider that we have in the account of the creation, in the first chapter of Genesis, still more distinct references to a Trinity. First we have God creating the heavens and the earth; secondly, we have His Spirit moving upon the waters; and thirdly, in the language, 'God said,'

parallel case, the parties are represented as 'standing before Jehovah.' In addition, some have contended that it means angels or other superhuman creatures, as in such passages as Ps. xcvi. 7, cxxxviii. 1. But this is strenuously denied by Gesenius and other eminent Hebrew scholars. At all events it remains certain, and the fact we deem of importance, that in no instance is the plural form used with a singular verb, except in reference to the one Supreme Being.

applied to each step of the process, compared with the statements of the New Testament, that all was created by the Son, who is described as the *λογος*, or Word, these writers suppose that there is an allusion to the personal Word of God. The language of the Psalmist (Ps. xxxiii. 6) on this subject, 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath,' or Spirit, 'of His mouth,' seems to suggest the same idea. Alexander on this passage well remarks, that there is in the verse an obvious allusion to the history of the creation in Genesis, and that the words convey the idea of the ease with which God can create a world. At the same time, he adds, it is not a mere fortuitous coincidence that these two words are used in Scripture to designate the second and third persons in the Godhead.

Very early we find God represented in a manner indicating that the distinction was threefold. Thus the dying patriarch Jacob, speaking under the influence of the Spirit of God, in blessing his grandsons, says (Gen. xlviii. 15, 16), 'God, before whom my fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did walk, the God which fed me,' or shepherded me, 'all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.' Upon this passage Delitzsch remarks: 'This triple reference to God, in which the

angel, who is placed on an equality with *Ha-elohim*, cannot possibly be a created angel, but must be the angel of God,' *i.e.* God manifested in the form of the angel of Jehovah, or 'the angel of His face' (Isa. lxiii. 9), contains a foreshadowing of the Trinity, though only God and the angel are distinguished, not three persons of the divine nature. The God before whom Abraham and Isaac walked had proved Himself to Jacob to be the 'God which fed' and 'the angel which redeemed,' *i.e.* according to the more fully developed revelation of the New Testament,  $\acute{o}$   $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\acute{o}$   $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , Shepherd and Redeemer. By the singular בָּרַךְ! (bless), the triple mention of God is resolved into the unity of the divine nature. 'Non dicit benedicant, pluraliter, nec repetit, sed conjungit in uno opere benedicendi tres personas, Deum patrum, Deum pastorem et Angelum. Sunt igitur hi tres unus Deus et unus benedictor Idem opus facit Angelus quod pastor et Deus Patrum.'—*Luther*. 'He does not say, Let them bless, in the plural, nor does he repeat (*viz.* the act of blessing to each), but he joins in one act of blessing three persons, the God of his fathers, God the Shepherd, and the angel. These three therefore are one God, and one blesser. The angel does the same work as the Shepherd and the God of his fathers.'

That a distinction of persons between God and

the angel is implied in this passage is generally admitted. It is also plain, that by their being united as one in blessing, the unity of the divine nature is represented. But we cannot help thinking that the words shadow forth the threefold distinction of persons in the Godhead, and their special operations for man's salvation. It is acknowledged by all that the phrase, 'The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk,' describes the Father, as has been said, 'who is the Author of salvation, the Judge, who dispenses justice and mercy, the Father, before whom the adopted and regenerate child walks.'<sup>1</sup> That by the angel is meant the second person in the Trinity, we shall have occasion to show presently. The description of Him, as having redeemed the patriarch from all evil, accords with the Son's work, as unfolded afterward. Whether the remaining phrase, 'The God who fed me all my life long unto this day,' refers to the Spirit, is not so clear. The Spirit, we know, did work in the early Church. 'God,' says Nehemiah, 'gave His good Spirit unto them;' and the nature of His work appears in the prayer of the Psalmist, 'Uphold me with Thy free Spirit.' 'Thy Spirit is good, lead me to the land of uprightness.' This seems to accord with the description given in this clause, which will

<sup>1</sup> Murphy on Genesis.

describe Him who is 'the upholder of life, the quickener and sanctifier, the potential agent, who works both to will and to do in the soul.'<sup>1</sup> If this be correct, the passage will shadow forth, it may be dimly, the gracious working of a three-one God.

But the threefold distinction is still more clearly manifested in the priestly blessing (Num. vi. 23-27). The priest was here commanded to pronounce the name of God thrice. Even the Jewish rabbins remarked this threefold repetition of the divine name, and they read it in Hebrew each time with a different accent, regarding it as involving a mystery in the divine nature. This threefold blessing is represented as putting *His name* upon the people of Israel. Had there been no design of teaching some other important truth, we are safe in saying, that it would have been more in accordance with the purpose of that dispensation, of establishing a pure monotheism among a people needing to learn it themselves, in order to make it known to a world in which it had been nearly lost, to have pronounced the name but once. But this is not all. In examining the three parts of the blessing particularly, we can scarcely fail to see, that they express the work of the three persons of the Trinity in the order of their subsistence, and

<sup>1</sup> Murphy on Genesis.

of their operation for man's salvation. 1. 'Jehovah bless thee and keep thee,' referring to God generally as the source of all good, and the protector from all evil; as our Saviour prays, 'Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me;' 'I pray that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.' 2. 'Jehovah make His face shine on thee and give thee peace,' expressive of God as manifesting His favour as reconciled through Christ. 3. 'Jehovah lift up His countenance and give thee peace,' expressive of God, as He inwardly unites Himself with His own, filling them with peace and joy by the application of salvation by the Spirit. In fact, we have only to read the words in connection with the apostolic benediction, placing the different parts in the same order, to see their entire accordance: 'The love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.' In truth, this seems to be the original, and the model of this and other forms of blessing in the New Testament.

It is added (ver. 27), 'Thou shalt put my *name* upon them, and I will bless them.' By His name is meant His revealed nature; and this promise, connected with the preceding words, teaches that in thus receiving of the gracious manifestation of the three, His people shall be completely blessed with

the whole fulness of the divine being, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The revelations of God's will in the earlier periods of the Old Covenant were usually made by theophanies, that is, divine appearances, either in bodily form or immediate vision. By these God made known His nature and purposes. When God appeared to our first parents, or at first to Abraham, it is not stated in what form He revealed Himself. But the attentive reader of the Old Testament cannot but have observed, how generally subsequent appearances of God were in and by the person known as the *Maleach Jehovah*, the Angel of the Lord, or, as some would render it, the Angel of Jehovah. He is called Jehovah and God, and divine works of judgment and mercy are attributed to Him, and yet at other times He is represented as distinct from Him. Thus He speaks sometimes in His own name and sometimes for the Supreme (Gen. xviii. 1-18). When Jehovah appeared to Abraham, 'lo, three men stood by him' (Gen. xviii. 1-3). One is the spokesman, to whom Abraham addresses himself, who is called Jehovah (vers. 13, 17), and who promises that Sarah shall have a son, and that in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed, with whom Abraham intercedes for Sodom, who executes judgment upon that

guilty city, and who yet is in the act distinguished from Jehovah (ch. xix. 24): 'Jehovah rained fire and brimstone from Jehovah out of heaven.' He appeared to Hagar, and speaks as the agent of God, saying, 'The Lord hath heard thine affliction;' and yet He promises as in His own name, saying, 'I will multiply thy seed exceedingly;' and in return she called the name of the Lord that spake with her, 'Thou God seest me' (Gen. xvi. 10-13). He appeared to Jacob in a dream, and announced Himself as 'the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me;' so that He was the Lord, who stood above the ladder and said, 'I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac' (Gen. xxxi. 11, 13, with xxviii. 13). With Him Jacob wrestled all night, and he said, 'I have seen God face to face.' In the desert of Midian, He appeared to Moses 'in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush.' The bush was miraculously unconsumed. 'Jehovah saw that He turned aside to see.' 'God called unto Moses out of the bush.' The speaker announces Himself as 'The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' 'Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God;' but receives further communications of God's will from Him who was in the bush, who claims the



perogatives of the Most High, even to being the great I Am (Ex. iii. 1-16). When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, He was their leader, and they were commanded to obey Him, and not provoke Him, because Jehovah's 'name was in Him' (Ex. xxiii. 21). He is expressly called the Angel of God's presence (Ex. xxxiii. 14, with Isa. lxiii. 9). A number of other passages of the same kind might be adduced,<sup>1</sup> but these are sufficient to show that God revealed Himself to the early Church through one who, though distinct in personality from the Father, was yet entitled to receive the incommunicable name, and was possessed of divine attributes—who, in short, was divine. The more closely such passages are examined, and compared with later revelations, the more reason we will find to be convinced of the truth of the old doctrine, that in the Angel of the Lord was represented to the Old Testament Church the second person of the Trinity, the only medium of divine manifestation to man.

At the same time the early Scriptures present to us the Spirit, in terms implying His divinity. He it was who first brooded over the face of the deep (Gen. i. 2); who is the author of life (Job xxvii. 3,

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Gen. xxii. 11, 12; Josh. v. 14, with vi. 2; Judg. ii. 1-5, vi. 11-22, xiii. 6-22.

xxxiii. 4, xxvi. 13; Ps. civ. 30), and of the special mental gifts bestowed upon men (Gen. xli. 38; Ex. xxxi. 3, xxxv. 31), and particularly of those qualifications by which men were fitted for high services before God (Num. xi. 26, 29; Judg. iii. 10, vi. 34, xi. 29, xiii. 25, xiv. 6). He it is who strives with the wickedness of men (Gen. vi. 3), and who was given to instruct and guide God's people (Neh. ix. 20; Isa. lxiii. 14).

Whether these early writers understood the personality of the Spirit, we cannot positively assert, but their language implies the idea; and it is plain that in these revelations of Him, particularly by the Angel of the Lord, God was partially revealing His triune nature, and preparing for a clearer exhibition of the truth in after ages.

The age of David and Solomon makes an important advance in the revelation of redemption. The glories of the kingdom of Israel gave a new colouring and form to the prophecies and expectations regarding the coming Deliverer. Instead of the seed of the woman, or the seed of Abraham, or the Prophet like unto Moses, the Church was now taught to look for Him as a glorious, yea, a divine King. In the Messianic Psalms we have Him represented as distinct from God, and yet His Son, essentially and truly God, while the Spirit is re-

ferred to, though less distinctly. The most prominent of these we now proceed to notice.

In the 2d Psalm, the nations are represented in rebellion against the Lord and His anointed Son. The Son is exalted as King, but He is so conjoined with the Father that the revolt is against them both. God, however, maintains Him in His authority, so that all must submit to Him or perish; all heathendom is to be included in His inheritance, and all who trust in Him are blessed. But we have specially to notice His being exhibited as God's Son, and that, as we believe, essentially (ver. 7): 'Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee.' Upon this verse Alexander remarks: 'No explanation of the terms will meet the requisitions of the context, except one, which supposes the relation here described as manifest in time to rest on one essential and eternal. This alone accounts for the identification of the persons as possessing a common interest, and reigning with and in each other. This profound sense of the passage is no more excluded by the phrase *this day*, implying something recent, than the universality of Christ's dominion is excluded by the local reference to Zion. The point of time, like the point of space, is the finite centre of an infinite circle. Besides, the mere form of the declaration is a part

of the dramatic scenery or costume with which the truth is here invested. . . . The essential meaning of the phrase, "I have begotten Thee," is simply this, I am Thy Father. The antithesis is perfectly identical with that in 2 Sam. vii. 14, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." Had the same form of expression been used here, "This day am I Thy Father," no reader would have understood "this day" as limiting the mutual relation of the parties, however it might limit, to a certain point of time, the formal recognition of it.

But the title 'Anointed,' or Messiah, points out the gifts of the Spirit. Under the Old Testament, anointing with oil was used in the case of setting apart prophets, priests, and kings (1 Kings xix. 16; Lev. viii. 12; 1 Kings i. 31); and was not only a sign of consecration to office, but was a symbol of those spiritual influences by which the recipient was qualified and designated for his work. This is evident from 1 Sam. x. 1-6 and xvi. 13, where, in the case of both Saul and David, the connection of the communication of the Spirit with the anointing with the oil, shows that the one was a type and pledge of the other. The same view is given in the New Testament (Acts iv. 27, x. 38; 2 Cor. i. 21; 1 John ii. 20, 27).

We have thus presented to us here the Divine

Father and the Divine Son explicitly, but the third person of the Trinity by implication.

We have a similar view of the Saviour in the 45th Psalm. There the Messiah is represented as a divine King, of more than human beauty, whose lips overflow with grace. He is directly addressed as God, and as seated on an everlasting throne (ver. 6): 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.' We have then God, as His Father, anointing Him with the oil of joy (ver. 7): 'Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.' From what has just been said regarding anointing with oil, as an emblem of the gifts of the Spirit, it is evident that His work upon the Mediator is here referred to, though He is not named. The joy and gladness may be, first, the spiritual comforts of the Redeemer's soul; but as the joy set before Him was the seeing of the travail of His soul in the salvation of sinners, as in Isaiah lxi. 1-3, His anointing is with special reference to His comforting the mourning children of men; and as the verses immediately following describe the source of His joy, in nations brought to Him, represented as kings' daughters, we take the words as pointing out the time of His dispensing the

Spirit, received from the Father, begun on the day of Pentecost. This we regard as indeed 'the day of His espousals, the day of the gladness of His heart' (Song iii. 11).

We have a very similar representation in Psalm lxxxix. 20, 21; but we do not deem it necessary to dwell upon it.

In the 72d Psalm, Solomon, at the height of his glory, pictures a super-human King, receiving His authority from the Father. His dominion is to be co-extensive with the world, and enduring as all time. He is immortal; omniscient, for He can hear every human cry; and omnipotent, for He can relieve all human wants. Through Him the richest blessings are to be abundantly diffused among men. But from the imagery of Scripture, we are convinced that the description points to the agency of the Holy Spirit. 'He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth' (ver. 6). Water, and particularly as coming down in showers, is a Scripture emblem of the Spirit. 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring' (Isa. xlv. 3).

Thus in these Psalms we see not only the first and second persons of the Trinity distinctly brought

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before us, but we have, in their types and figures, reference also to the third.

Some writers have regarded the threefold rhythm sometimes employed in the Psalter in the praise of God, as indicative of the trinity of persons in the Godhead. We do find instances in which the ordinary parallelism of Hebrew poetry is sacrificed in this way, and it may be with the design of expressing the inner mysteries of the divine nature. A few examples may be given.

'O sing unto JEHOVAH, a new song ;

Sing unto JEHOVAH, all the earth.

Sing unto JEHOVAH, bless His name' (Ps. cvi. 1, 2).

'Give unto JEHOVAH, O ye kindreds of the people,

Give unto JEHOVAH, glory and strength ;

Give unto JEHOVAH, the glory due unto His name.

Bring an offering, and come into His courts' (Ps. xcvi. 7, 8).

'Let Israel now say, that His mercy endureth for ever ;

Let the house of Aaron now say, that His mercy endureth for ever ;

Let them now that fear the Lord say, that His mercy endureth for ever' (Ps. cxviii. 2-4).

'All nations compassed me about :

But in the name of JEHOVAH will I destroy them.

They compassed me about ; yea, they compassed me about :

But in the name of JEHOVAH I will destroy them.

They compassed me about like bees ;

They are quenched as the fire of thorns :

For in the name of JEHOVAH will I destroy them' (Ps. cxviii. 10-12).

'The right hand of JEHOVAH doeth valiantly ;

The right hand of JEHOVAH is exalted ;

The right hand of JEHOVAH is exalted' (Ps. cxviii. 15, 16).

To us it appears, however, that the instances of this kind are not so numerous as to warrant us to lay much stress upon them. But we think that the Psalmist, in the introductory words of his last prophecy, clearly expresses the unity in trinity of the Almighty :

'The Spirit of JEHOVAH spake by me,  
And His word was in my tongue.  
The God of Israel said,  
The Rock of Israel spake to me' (2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3).



## CHAPTER II.

### THE COMPLETE REVELATION OF THE OLD COVENANT.

**W**E have already observed, that as the revelation of God's will under the Old Testament reached its culmination in the prophecies of the later ages of the Jewish kingdom,—that as then the redemption to be achieved was as much more clearly unfolded, and the Redeemer as vividly depicted, as they could be before the event,—the intimations of the doctrine of the Trinity appear proportionally distinct, and approach almost to the clearness of the New Testament. We therefore now proceed to consider some of those passages in the later writings of the Old Testament canon, which to us seem most clearly to indicate the Trinity working out man's salvation.

Here, of course, our attention is first called to the prophecies of Isaiah, the richness and clearness of whose exhibitions of gospel truth have caused him to be named the Evangelical Prophet. In the forefront of them stands the vision in which he

was invested with his office (ch. vi. 1-3): 'I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims. . . . And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.' In this *Trishagion*, as it is commonly called, or ascription of holiness three times, most writers have found an allusion to the Trinity. Thus Jerome says, 'that they show the mystery of the Trinity in one Godhead, and declare not the Jewish temple as previously, but the whole earth to be full of His glory.'<sup>1</sup> Then the difference of number between the verb and the pronoun in the words (ver. 8), 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' can only be explained by reference to the doctrine of a Trinity; or, at least, the language implies a plurality of persons in the Godhead. But, looking to the New Testament, we are not left in any uncertainty on the subject. While the prophet was deeply humbled, seeing the King, the Lord of hosts, the Evangelist John represents the whole as a vision of Christ. 'These things said Esaias when he saw Christ's glory' (John xii. 41). And yet the words spoken to the

<sup>1</sup> 'Ut mysterium Trinitatis in uno Divinitate demonstrant et nequaquam templum Judaicum sicut prius, sed omnem terram illius gloriæ plenam esse testentur.'

prophet on the occasion are by Paul ascribed to the Holy Ghost (Acts xxviii. 25, 26): 'Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people,' etc.

We would next point out the doctrine of the Trinity, as implied in the prophet's description of the person of the coming Redeemer. He distinctly declares Him to be God (Isa. vii. 14, ix. 6); while, with the other prophets, he frequently describes Him in terms which imply His divinity; and the Holy Ghost is represented in a similar manner. But the passages to which we wish to advert at present, are those in which the three persons are exhibited as meeting in Him who was to be the anointed Saviour.

Thus in Isaiah xlii. i it is said, 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I will put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.' We need not spend time in proving that this passage refers to the Messiah. The frequent quotation of it in the New Testament with this application is sufficient to establish the point. We have it thus applied in the words of the Father Himself at the baptism of Christ, and at His transfiguration, the word Son being substituted for servant. The title Servant of God is given *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, by pre-eminence; and the title Son, substituted for it in the New

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Testament, still more strongly expresses His personal dignity. Upon this Alexander well remarks: 'The connecting link between the *Servant* of Isaiah and the *Son* of Matthew is afforded by the *παῖς* of the Septuagint, which includes both ideas.' He adds that '(*υἱός*) *Son* is neither a translation of the Hebrew *ebed*, nor a perversion of its meaning, but a clearer designation of the subject of the prophecy.' This person thus described is next represented as receiving the Spirit in all its fulness, and under His influence, and through a course of meekness and lowliness, establishing righteousness upon the earth, and bringing the whole Gentile world into subjection. 'I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. . . . He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment on the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.'

We have the same ideas in somewhat different language in Isaiah lxi. 1: 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,' etc. As in chapter xlii. 1 Jehovah had said, 'I have put my Spirit upon him,' so here he says of himself, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me.' But in the next clause he repre-

sents his influences as bestowed by God: 'Because the Lord hath anointed me.' Anointing with oil, as we have already seen, was not only a sign of consecration to office, but was a symbol of those spiritual influences by which the recipient was both qualified and designated for his work. Thus we have the Son, who assumes the offices of prophet, priest, and king for His people; the Spirit, through whose influence He was fitted for His work; and the Father, by whom the Spirit is bestowed. Then follows a glowing description of the changes to be effected in human society as the result of His mission.

The representation of Isaiah xi. 1, 2 is very similar: 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.' This sevenfold description of the Spirit in His influences seems to correspond with the title given to Him in the New Testament as the seven Spirits of God (Rev. i. 4). As we have here first the Spirit of Jehovah generally, and then His gifts arranged in three pairs, the description seems also to correspond with the shaft of the seven-lighted candlestick, and the three pairs of branches from it.

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For 'the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne are the seven Spirits of God' (Rev. iv. 5). The attributes here ascribed to the Spirit are not personal qualities, but the effects of His working. He is not here described as Himself wise, but as the author of wisdom. The language describes such a fulness of His gifts—such wisdom, theoretical and practical, such capacity to plan and power to execute, and such piety toward God, as was only realized in the Lord Jesus Christ, 'whose wisdom,' as Alexander remarks, 'displayed itself in early life, and is expressly ascribed to a special divine influence; who proved Himself a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; whose ministry was not only characterized by fortitude and boldness, but attested by miracles and mighty deeds; whose knowledge of divine things far surpassed that of all other men; and who was Himself a living model of all piety.' In the verses following (3-5) is described the result upon the Messiah in an infallible capacity of judging. But then follows the issue to the world, in such an outflowing of the influences of the Spirit from Him, as will totally change its moral character, causing the wolf to dwell with the lamb, the leopard to lie down with the kid, and the whole earth to be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea;—in which

description may be also included that transformation of the natural world, by which even the physical creation shall be delivered from 'corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God' (Rom. viii. 21).

Thus in each of these three passages we have the three divine persons brought before us, and in the same relations : the Father, who sends the Deliverer, and who imparts the Spirit in the fulness of His gifts ; the Spirit, who qualifies the Mediator for His work ; and the Son, who assumes that office, who receives the Spirit, and that without measure. And in each we have the glorious result of His mission in the salvation of the world. This last fact alone would be sufficient to prove the divinity of the Deliverer, because the pouring out of the Spirit upon Him without measure, so that He could thus baptize with the Holy Ghost, and so that, in consequence of the outflowing from Him of His fulness of spiritual gifts, a fallen world should be regenerated, implies a capacity without human or created limits ; while the prophet had further described Him as born of a virgin, and as thus Emmanuel, God with us, the mighty God, and the everlasting Father, or Father of eternity. Thus we have a Trinity implied in the description of the person of the incarnate Mediator. But this will fall again under our notice when we

come to consider the teaching of the New Testament on the subject.

To us it appears, though but little attention has been given to the subject, that the practice so common in the prophecies of Isaiah, of speaking of God under a triple title, has its foundation in the internal distinction in the Godhead of three persons, and their respective offices in redemption. Let us notice a few examples:—

- Isa. xl. 28. 'God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth.'
- „ xli. 14. 'The Lord and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.'
- „ xliii. 1. 'The Lord, He that created thee, that formed thee, O Israel.'
- „ xliii. 3. 'The Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel thy Saviour.'
- „ xliii. 14. 'The Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.'
- „ xliii. 15. 'The Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.'
- „ xliv. 6. 'The Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts.'
- „ xliv. 24. 'The Lord, thy Redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb.'
- „ xlv. 11. 'The Lord, the Holy One of Israel and his Maker.'
- „ xlvii. 4. 'Our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is His name, the Holy One of Israel.'
- „ xlviii. 17. 'The Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.'
- „ xlix. 7. 'The Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One.'
- „ xlix. 26. 'I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.'
- „ liv. 5. 'Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is His name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel.'



Isa. lx. 17. 'I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.'

These and such triplets applied to the Supreme, as He appears for the deliverance of His chosen people, we think do *hint* at the Trinity, afterwards more clearly revealed. We cannot but notice how frequently we have 'Redeemer' or *God* as a second title. It suggested to the Israelite the ideas of a near kinsman, and a deliverer by the payment of a ransom. But this at once brings before us the second person of the Trinity, though the Old Testament saints, may have understood it only as an additional title of the one God, and may not have understood the distinction of persons implied. That the title is sometimes exchanged for another, such as Creator, does not contradict this view. It only teaches the additional fact that He who is the Redeemer is also the Creator. We cannot but observe, too, how well the title, 'the Holy One,' so often given as a third, corresponds with the usual name in the New Testament of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, or, as it is in some instances expressed in the original, 'the Spirit, the Holy One' (Eph. i. 13; 1 Thess. iv. 8), or simply the Holy One (1 John ii. 20). That this is exchanged for such a title as 'the mighty One of Jacob,' is in accordance with the New Testament

representations of Him as the power of God in working, especially in His moral and spiritual kingdom (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 8; Luke i. 35; Mark ix. 1; 1 Thess. i. 5; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5). That the order differs, is only what we see in the New Testament, where the Son is sometimes put before the Father, as in the apostolic benediction, 2 Cor. xiii. 14; or the Spirit before the Son, as in Rev. i. 4, 5.

We shall now consider some passages referring to the redemption itself by the mission of the Son, which show the doctrine of the Trinity underlying their teaching. The first of these we shall notice is Isa. xlvi. 16: 'From the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and His Spirit, hath sent me.' Here we have the three persons in the Godhead particularly mentioned, though the exact meaning of part of the words is disputed. The order of the words as they stand in the original is, 'The Lord God hath sent me and His Spirit.' The accordance of the first clause, in which the Father is represented as sending the Son, and the Son as sent by Him, with many passages of the Old and New Testaments, is so obvious as to require no elucidation; but it is doubtful whether the Spirit is added as connected with the subject or the object of the verb,—that is, whether He is to be joined with the Father in sending, or with the Son as sent. The

original will bear either interpretation, and the Septuagint presents the same obscurity. The English and the Vulgate remove the ambiguity by changing the order of the words. Interpreters are about equally divided on the subject. Calvin and a number of German writers follow the arrangement of our version; while Vitringa, Henderson, Delitzsch, and others, prefer the opposite view. In either case 'the Spirit' must be regarded as not holding its regular position in the sentence, but as introduced by a sort of afterthought, and it might be joined with either the Father or the Son; so that we must judge of the meaning on other grounds than the grammatical construction. We prefer the interpretation which regards the Spirit as sent with the Son. It is certainly unusual, and we think unparalleled, to find the Spirit joined with the Father in the actual sending of the Son. Even when the Spirit is joined with the Father in reference to the Son's work, the Spirit is not exhibited as sending the Son, but as Himself sent or given by the Father, in order to qualify Him for His work. Further, as in the passage the speaker is represented in His mediatorial capacity as carrying out the scheme of redemption, it seems to us more in accordance with the other portions of the word of God to regard the words as teaching, that it is by the agency of the Spirit, sent

forth by the Father, that His successes are achieved. Perhaps, as Alexander suggests, the ambiguity was intended to suggest either meaning.

But whichever way the words be read, the passage will apply to our present purpose. According to both interpretations, we have here the three persons in the Godhead: One who speaks of himself in language similar to that in which the personified Wisdom of God speaks in Prov. viii., and who introduces the others. 'From the time of its being,' or 'that all these things happened,' I was there; but *now*, at the turning point of salvation, the time of actual accomplishment of redemption, 'the Lord God hath sent me and His Spirit.' There is here the Father sending the Son, the Son sent, and the Spirit the agent, either in qualifying the Son, or in carrying out His redemption by its application to the hearts of men.

In Isaiah lix. 19-21 we have another clear prophecy of the redemption for God's Church, in which the three are represented as concurring in the work. In the first clause of verse 19 is described the future extension of the Church: 'So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun.' And if our translation be correct, the last clause ascribes this result to the agency of the Spirit: 'When the enemy

comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.'<sup>1</sup> At all events the two following verses, the last of the chapter, exhibit the three as engaged in those great transactions which are to issue in the millennial glory of the Church, as described in the following chapter. First, we have in verse 20 the *goel*, our kinsman Redeemer, coming for His Church, which had remained faithful, along with those who, converted from previous apostasy, shall be brought into union with her: 'And the Redeemer shall come for Zion, and for those who turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.' Then we have, secondly, God the Father manifesting His grace in entering into covenant with them, expressed in the same terms as are employed in reference to His engagement with Abraham (ver. 21): 'As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord.' And thirdly, we have the Spirit, the great promise of the New Testament, descending and permanently abiding upon them, exerting His influence by means of the truth, which they are the instruments of proclaiming, and giving effect to it, so as to make them the light of the world

<sup>1</sup>The clause, as Alexander remarks, 'has been a famous subject of dispute among interpreters, who differ more or less in reference to every word, as well as to the general meaning of the whole;' and therefore we have not pressed it.

and the reclaimed of nations: 'My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth' (not merely in thine ear to receive, but in thy mouth to proclaim), 'shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.'

We have already referred to the person so often mentioned in the Old Testament as the angel of the Lord, or the angel Jehovah, showing that in him was represented to the Church, under that dispensation, the second person of the Trinity, through whom God held gracious communications with men. The two passages we are now to consider will further illustrate this. In both,—the first describing the typical redemption from Egypt, and the second, the antitype, or the redemption of men from the guilt and bondage of sin,—this angel is set between the Father and the Spirit in terms implying his divinity, and not only as concurring with them in the work but as the actual Redeemer.

The first is Isa. lxiii. 7-10. Here we have God, in His love and compassion, acting as their Saviour (vers. 7, 8): 'I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us' (is this three-fold repetition of the name Jehovah of no account?),

'and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them, according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His loving-kindnesses. For He said, Surely (or only) they are my people, children that will not lie: so He was their Saviour.'

But verse 9 shows the manner in which He was in actual reality their Saviour, viz. by the agency of the angel referred to: 'In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the ANGEL OF HIS PRESENCE saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.' The title 'angel of His presence,' or 'angel of His face,' expresses not merely the angel who sees His face, but one who is His face, or in whom His face is represented. But this clearly points out Him who, in New Testament language, is described as 'the image of the invisible God' (Col. i. 15); 'the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person' (Heb. i. 3); 'the image of God' (2 Cor. iv. 4); and 'in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (Col. ii. 9).

In emphatic contrast with God's goodness, however, Israel's conduct is set forth (ver. 10): 'But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them.' The working of God's Spirit with Israel in

their early history is plainly affirmed. 'God,' says Nehemiah (ch. ix. 20), 'gave His good Spirit unto them.' 'As the beast goeth down into the valley,' says Isaiah (ver. 14), 'so the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest.' As the angel is a person, so must the Spirit be, as is plain from the word 'vexed,' which can only apply to a person feeling grief. (Eph. iv. 30.)

Thus in the redemption of Israel, prefigurative of the greater redemption by God's Son, we have unmistakable indication of a Trinity, which is revealed more fully in its New Testament antitype.

The verses immediately following, as they stand in our version, seem to contain a further recognition of the Trinity (vers. 11-14): 'Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of the flock? where is He that put His Holy Spirit within him?' We cannot but observe the resemblance of the first part of the verse to Heb. xiii. 20: 'The God of peace, that brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep;' and if there be the same application here, we have the Father and the Son, and in addition, in the last clause, God working by His Spirit. But as the meaning of the verse is disputed, and even the true reading of the original is unsettled, we do not press it.

The other passage is in the prophecies of Zechariah (ch. ii. iii. and iv.). In these we have three visions, not



only in immediate succession, but closely connected. Let us notice them in their order, and observe whether we do not find the three persons of the Godhead, each in His appropriate office for the Church. In the second chapter,—after the vision of a man with a measuring line going forth to measure Jerusalem, indicating the great Head of the Church as enlarging and exactly defining her future boundaries, in consequence of her area being too limited,—the angel interpreter announces to the prophet God's rich promises of good in store for her. These promises involve, first, her great extension. 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls,' or shall inhabit the open country, 'for the multitude of men and cattle therein' (ver. 4). It shall no longer be encircled by close walls, but shall extend into the plains beyond, filling them with open towns and villages, in consequence of the abundance with which God has blessed her. The narrow walls of Judaic forms shall be thrown down, and the blessings of salvation extended beyond the boundaries of the Jewish people. Secondly, her perfect safety, notwithstanding the absence of such outward protection, through the power of God, who will also fill her with His glory. 'For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her' (ver. 5). Thirdly, the subjuga-

tion of her enemies. '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 mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants' (vers. 8, 9). But especially God's coming to dwell in her by the special manifestations of power and grace. 'Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord' (ver. 10). And in connection with this the bringing in of the Gentiles. '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' (ver. 11).

But this exhibition of God the Father, as reconciled and dwelling in His Church, is immediately followed<sup>1</sup> in the third chapter by a vision, showing this as secured through the purging away of her sins by the interposition of the angel of the Lord, the same divine person already considered. Here Joshua the high priest, as the representative of Israel, appears standing before the angel of the Lord, 'clad in filthy garments,'—emblem of the sinful condition of the people,—and Satan, 'the accuser of the brethren,'

<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg well remarks: 'The future with *vau conversive* connects this vision closely with the one which precedes it, and shows that it constitutes one link in the series of visions, which were all seen by the prophet in one night.'—*Christol.* iii. 317, Clark's Translation.

standing at his right hand, objecting to the bestowal of these blessings, on account of the guilt of those represented by the high priest. And then the angel, called also Jehovah, and placed on an equality with Him, but who is at the same time distinguished from Him, interposes, pleading God's electing and saving grace (ver. 2): 'JEHOVAH said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; even Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?'—a people exposed to destruction by the fires of divine wrath, but delivered, though with difficulty, by the hand of another. As the result of his interposition, the command is given by the divine angel to his higher servants, the angels who stand by, that the filthy garments, emblems of sinfulness, should be taken away, — expressive of forgiveness of the sins of the nation in him,—and festal robes put on him,—a symbol of the pure righteousness in which they are justified. In further token of divine favour, at the prophet's request, a clean mitre is set upon his head,—emblem of his restoration to office, in which he was permitted to appear in the immediate presence of God. This is done not only by command of the divine angel, but 'He stands by' superintending the proceedings.

Then follows a call to Joshua, and those associated with him in the priesthood, to listen with profound

attention to the promise of the Messiah. 'Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee: I will bring forth my servant The BRANCH.' The Old Testament saints might not have understood that this was the same person with the angel; but to us, under the light of the New Testament, the matter is clear, from our knowledge of the union of the divine and human natures in Christ. As the result of His coming, God shall prepare His kingdom, Zion shall be polished and engraved as a beautiful and costly stone, fitted to promote His glory; but in order to this, by the agency of the servant the Branch, there is complete atonement. 'I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day,'—describing the perfection of His sacrifice, so that it needs no repetition. As Paul says, 'By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' And by the wiping away of iniquity a state of blessed repose and prosperity will ensue to the purified Church of God. 'In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.' Who can fail to see in all this a representation of the Son's work for the salvation of His people?

Then follows in chapter iv. the third vision. Under the figure of the candlestick, with its seven

lamps, is represented the Church as a light shining in the dark night of this world (Matt. v. 14; Phil. ii. 15; Rev. i. 12-20) The light is maintained by two olive trees—living and permanent sources of supply—distilling the oil which they drew from the earth, through the seven pipes, into the seven lamps. From passages already quoted, we would have no difficulty in understanding this vision as denoting the influences of the Spirit, by whose supplies of grace the Church is enabled to shine as a light in the world, diffusing knowledge, holiness, and happiness among mankind. But we are not left thus to seek the meaning of the symbol, for it was immediately explained by the angel interpreter (vers. 4-6): 'So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by *my Spirit*, saith the Lord.' As the result of this, the mightiest obstacles to the progress of the Church shall be levelled; and, changing the figure, the great spiritual temple will go on to completion, till 'the top-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings, crying Grace, grace unto it.'

Thus, in these three visions, so closely connected, which were all vouchsafed to the prophet in a single night, we have exhibited in succession the abounding grace of the Father, the mediatorial work of the Son, and the efficient agency of the Spirit, in the founding, progress, and ultimate glory of the Church.

In the twelfth chapter of the same prophecy, from the 10th verse onward, we have another prophecy of gospel times, in which the three persons of the Godhead are again introduced. The passage is particularly descriptive of the conversion of the Jews, as it was begun on the day of Pentecost, and as it will be completed in their yet future restoration to the Church: 'I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon ME, whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for HIM (observe the change of person here) as one mourneth for an only son.' Whatever view we take of the title '*Spirit of grace*,' whether as expressive of the gracious nature of the third person of the Trinity, or of His action on the heart of man as producing gracious affections, we have in this passage God the Father pouring out the Spirit, and the Spirit as poured out, and the result the repentance of the people; but this effected through faith in a third divine person, pierced for our transgres-

sions, so that through Him, as is declared in chapter xiii. 1, 'a fountain is opened for sin and for uncleanness.' He is God, for Jehovah says, 'They shall look upon ME, whom they have pierced;' but there is an immediate change in the next clause to the third person, 'They shall mourn for HIM,' indicating that He is one with the Father, yet distinct. But who He is, we are not left to conjecture; for at the conclusion it is said (ch. xiii. 7): 'Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.'

In the prophecies of Haggai (ch. ii. 4-6) there is a passage which is quoted by many of the old divines in support of the doctrine of the Trinity: 'I am with you, saith the Lord. According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.' The words 'according to' are a supplement, and are not found in a number of versions, and are now regarded as uncalled for and unnecessary. The original is simply, 'The word which I covenanted with you,' etc. The construction is somewhat unusual; but all the more recent authorities agree that 'the word' is to be taken in the nominative, and conjoined with the Spirit as also abiding with them. Now, it is certainly remarkable, that we have here the Word placed between

the Father and the Spirit, and joined with them in one gracious promise of presence for good. We know, too, that the title is given in the New Testament as a name of the second person of the Trinity. Moreover, by understanding the language as referring to the personal Word, the remaining part of that clause, 'which I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt,' would be brought into exact correspondence with other passages, in which He is described as the angel of the covenant, by whom God brought His people out of Egypt (Mal. iii. 1; Isa. lxiii. 9; Exod. xxiii. 20, 32, 34). This view is also in accordance with the connection of this clause with the previous one, as dependent upon it: 'I am with thee, the Word,' etc. God was with them by the angel of His presence, whom we have seen to be the Son of God, and also by His Spirit working mightily among them, and so He continued. The language might not have suggested to the Old Testament saints the idea of the Word as a personal being. But yet we cannot help thinking that it was used designedly, and that to us it properly suggests Him who is the Word of the Lord. Taking the passage thus, it obscurely but really points to a Trinity.

A number of other passages might be adduced, which teach at least a plurality of persons in the



Godhead, and less distinctly the working of the three divine persons; but these are sufficient to show that, in reality, the doctrine was underlying God's revelation to man in the preparatory economy.

Fully to appreciate, however, the force of the teaching of the Old Testament on this subject, we must keep in view, what has been already said regarding the dominant principle of that dispensation, that 'There is one God, the Father.' Against all recognition of any other, the Mosaic legislation was directed at every point, and the history of the chosen people under that dispensation was a solemn testimony from God against all forms of worship to any other but the one living and true God. In every part of their sacred books is prominently presented the unapproachable majesty, and the incommunicable glory, of the one God; and every form of address—tender entreaty and solemn denunciation, cutting irony and biting sarcasm, and even what they condescend to employ on no other subject, playful raillery—is employed to excite loathing for all other gods as abominations, or contempt for them as vanity.

How, then, are we to explain these indications of a plurality of persons—of others beside the one God, assuming divine prerogatives, and receiving divine honours? How was the Old Testament

loyal to its own ruling purpose, unless, in the unity of the divine essence, there were three personal distinctions? If it were intended to teach a monotheism without any such distinctions, does not the Koran answer the purpose better than it does? Can we regard it as either consistent with itself, or worthy of divine wisdom, unless we understand it,—while fully unfolding its own special principle of revealing the Father, and maintaining His unrivalled honours, as representing the Godhead,—yet at the same time as containing the germs of a fuller revelation; and unless we receive the inspired utterances of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, and the Evangelical Prophet, as, in their pregnant simplicity, containing deeper truths, which were to be fully expanded in the teaching of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and of the beloved disciple, appropriately designated ‘the divine?’

O Father Almighty, to Thee be addressed,  
With Christ and the Spirit, one God ever blest,  
All glory and worship, from earth and from heaven,  
As was, and is now, and shall ever be given.



PART II.



THE GOSPELS;

OR,

THE REVELATION OF THE SON.

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*'To us there is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.'*—1 COR. VIII. 6.



## INTRODUCTORY.

**T**HE New Testament, it is scarcely necessary to remark, contains the completed revelation of God's will. What was only dimly indicated in the institutions and prophecies of the preparatory dispensation, is there so clearly unfolded, that it may be truly said, 'The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.'

From an early period the New Testament was divided, according to its contents, into two parts, known as *Gospel* and *Apostle*, which, as formerly observed, represent respectively the special manifestation of the second and third persons of the Godhead. Upon the consideration of the first of these we are now to enter. It consists of four narratives of the life of our Lord, each having its distinctive features, and presenting a special aspect of His person and work, but yet, after all, together forming one history, in which these representations are blended into one harmonious image.

But we have only to glance at the opening por-

tions of each of the four, to see that their avowed design was to exhibit the manifestation of the second person of the Trinity in the flesh. Matthew begins his Gospel with the human genealogy, and birth from a virgin, of Him who—he is careful to show from Old Testament prophecy—is yet ‘Emmanuel, God with us.’ Mark commences his Gospel by the simple announcement, ‘The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;’ while Luke’s history begins with a more detailed account of His incarnation, which we shall consider more fully presently, but which, we remark here, represents Him as essentially the Son of God. But John rises still higher. His beginning was not at His human birth, or the commencement of His ministry, but before time. Then was the Word. He was with God, not merely along with God, *παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ*, but *πρὸς τὸν Θεόν*, holding permanent and intimate intercommunion with Him, with face directed, as it were, to His face. But He is not represented as an independent being, existing externally to Him. The idea of such a being before creation would be entirely contrary to the unity of God. Hence He is absolute God. ‘The Word was God.’ But this Word, whose eternal existence, distinct personality, and absolute Godhead are here so explicitly declared, appears in human flesh, and in it makes the Father

obvious to man, pouring the rays of His glory through the veil of His earthly tabernacle. 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.' But this Word is also the eternal, only begotten Son of God. 'No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus the opening of each of the Gospels shows that the design of the whole was to present before us the manifestation of the second person of the Trinity, and the most superficial view of them will show that their whole contents coincide with this idea. But our design leads us to consider rather the relation of the three persons, as unfolded by Him; and we trust to be able to show, looking at the four Gospels as a whole, and as forming one history, that the representation of the Saviour which they contain assumes the doctrine of the Trinity, and that His teaching and work, as there exhibited, are based upon it.

<sup>1</sup> We cannot help remarking in passing, that the manner in which the Godhead and incarnation of Christ stand in the very forefront of all the Gospel narratives, shows how radically and inherently vicious are all those attempts, such as *Ecce Homo*, to describe the life and mission of the Son,—which ignore these truths and acknowledge only His humanity,—however eloquent they may be, or whatever mixture of partial truth they may contain.



## THE INCARNATION.

AT the very commencement of the Gospel history the germs of the doctrine which appear in the Old Testament are taken up, and begin to expand. The coming birth of the Saviour is announced as the incarnation of a divine person, according to the terms of ancient prophecy (Matt. i. 23): 'A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us.' But further,—as we have seen prominently brought forward in Old Testament predictions the concern of the divine Three in the person of the coming Redeemer,—so, when he is actually produced, it is in a manner strikingly proclaiming the working of a Triune God. In these terms is his birth announced to the virgin mother (Luke i. 31-35): 'Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. . . . The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing, that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.'

In this passage we have God the Highest, whose son (in whatever sense we understand that expression) is to appear. We have then the Spirit, by whose agency the human nature of that son was to be produced. The parallel phrase, 'power of God,' shows him to be divine, and is used to express God as working by the Spirit (Luke xxiv. 49). And then we have the son himself, who is conceived of the virgin. We cannot fully investigate the question as to why the title 'Son of God' is given to the son of Mary. But two remarks may be made. First, the expression 'he shall be called,' is not synonymous with 'he shall be.' It properly means that he shall be revealed, manifested, or shown to be the Son of God. And secondly, the original being without the article—Son of God, not *the* Son of God—the title expresses relationship. The meaning of the whole, therefore, we take to be, that the pure humanity produced by the Holy Ghost, according to the Father's will, was a fit instrument for the exhibition to man—the manifestation in flesh—of him who stands in relation actually to God as His son. We do not suppose that Mary understood that her predicted offspring was divine, though we believe that this is taught in the words; and we can see that it might have been concealed from her in wisdom, otherwise she would not have been fitted to bring up

the child. She knew enough to excite reverential respect, but not enough to interfere with her receiving his filial submission. But with the fuller light which we now have, there can be no difficulty in recognising him, as here set forth, as the Eternal Son of God (Matt. xxvii. 43 ; Heb. i. 2, 5, 8 ; John x. 36). In other passages the incarnation is ascribed to each of the three persons in the Godhead respectively. It is ascribed to the Father: 'A body hast Thou prepared me;' to the Son: 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also took part of the same;' and to the Holy Ghost: 'That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.' But from the above examination of the passage before us, we see that in it the whole three divine persons are brought together in the production of the human nature of Christ, and its mysterious union with the divine in His incarnation.

#### THE MINISTRY OF THE FORERUNNER.

Thirty years later our Lord entered upon His public ministry; and, as in prophecy He had been represented as qualified for His work by the agency of the Spirit, given by the Father, this was fully realized on His receiving baptism at the hands of

John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 16, 17): 'Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' (See also Mark i. 10, 11; Luke iii. 22.) Here, in accordance with the passages quoted from the Old Testament (Isa. xi. 2, xlii. 1, lxi. 1; Ps. xlv. 6, 7), we have exhibited the three-fold personality in the divine essence: the Father audibly addressing the Son, and recognising Him as His Son in a sense altogether peculiar—His Son by nature; and the Spirit visibly descending on Him, as He commences the work of His Messianic office; so that one of the Fathers well observes, 'I ad Jordanum, et videbis Trinitatem,'—Go to Jordan, and you will see Trinity.

John speaks of the same event in a manner which shows that in it he recognised the three divine persons. 'John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw,

and bare record that this is the Son of God' (John i. 32-34). This testimony of the Baptist brings out two particulars in addition to what we had in the accounts of the other Evangelists. First, we have the idea of the Spirit 'abiding,' or remaining upon the Son, corresponding to the prophet's representation of it as 'resting' upon Him (Isa. xi. 2); and, secondly, we have His being baptized of the Spirit represented as the basis of His baptizing others with the same influence, which could only be done by a divine person. Thus the three are here recognised in the same manner as by the other Evangelists, with only a fuller exhibition of the divinity of the Son.

But in the closing notice which the Evangelist John has given of the Baptist's ministry, we have the completed testimony of the latter to the Son, in terms which, perhaps, still more clearly exhibit the three divine persons as conjoined in the mission of our Lord. 'He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony. He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that *God* is true. For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the

SPIRIT by measure *unto* Him. The FATHER loveth the SON, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him' (John iii. 31-36).

In this passage we have a very full exhibition of the offices and relations of each of the three persons of the Godhead. There is presented to us, first, the Father, who loveth the Son, who sends Him into the world, who imparts to Him the Spirit in all His fulness, and who hath given all things into His hands. There is, secondly, the Son, who came from heaven, and who is above all, in opposition even to the highest of human teachers, who are of the earth, and have only a temporary mission; who testifies what He has seen and heard, and not merely, as the forerunner, what He had received by revelation; who is sent of God and speaks His words, because He has received from Him the Spirit without measure, which no mere created intelligence could do; for they can only receive Him to the extent of their limited powers, but He into the infinite capacities of His divine nature; who is loved of the Father, and has received all power from Him, so that through Him alone is salvation enjoyed by the children of men. And, thirdly, the Spirit given, and abiding with Him (giveth in the present tense), without

measure; so that, under His influence, the incarnate Son becomes the full revealer of God, and completely fitted for His Messianic work.

How clearly, then, does a Trinity appear in the preparatory ministry of the forerunner! But in the passages referred to, the three are presented to us especially in relation to the person of the Mediator. But onward we must trace the doctrine as bearing upon His work for man.

#### OPENING OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.

Shortly after His baptism, our Lord entered upon His public ministry, by going up to Jerusalem, the seat of the Jewish theocracy, and there asserting His divine commission in the presence of the heads and representatives of the chosen nation, by purging the temple and reproving the wickedness of the rulers, who permitted His Father's house to be made a house of merchandise. When asked for a sign, He replied by a parable, indicating the future events of His life, and the ends to be accomplished by His mission. 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' He, however, did work miracles, which were the means of inducing in some a belief that He was the Messiah; but their faith

resting merely on such exhibitions of His power, and not on any spiritual perception of their wants, or of His character as the Saviour, He did not commit Himself to them. (John ii. 24, 25.) But,<sup>1</sup> during this visit to Jerusalem, there came to Him one in whom He saw the germ of faith, and a susceptibility of instruction; and to whom, therefore, our Lord unfolded fully the nature of His work and kingdom. This was Nicodemus, a ruler of the Pharisees; and our Lord's discourse with him, recorded in the third chapter of John's Gospel, stands in the forefront of our Lord's teaching, and forms one of the clearest and most comprehensive exhibitions of the mysteries of His kingdom to be found in the whole New Testament, presenting the whole sum and substance of the doctrine of Him who came down from heaven. We shall, however, notice our Lord's statements on this occasion only as they bear on the doctrine of the Trinity; and we are mistaken if the doctrine of three divine persons severally working in our salvation, will not be found at the basis of the whole discussion, determining its arrangement.

Our Lord begins by announcing to Nicodemus the great change required in the heart of every man in

<sup>1</sup> The particle *δέ*, which connects John iii. 1 with the last verse of the preceding chapter, is unnoticed by our translators. It expresses the contrast between Nicodemus and those previously mentioned, and might be rendered 'but.'



order to admission to His kingdom; but this He is careful to point out as the work of the Spirit (John iii. 5, 6): 'Except a man be born of water and of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' And, in reply to the astonished inquiry of His hearer at this demand, He exhibits, by a comparison of the wind, the free self-determination of the Spirit, and His powerful yet mysterious operations on the heart of man. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' Thus, beginning with the work as in the heart of man, He exhibits just the work of the third person of the Trinity in our salvation.

But to the inquiry of Nicodemus, 'How can these things be?' our Lord—after reproving his ignorance of divine truth, while possessed of such high privileges—leads him back from the work of the Spirit to that of the Son, by exhibiting His divinity, incarnation, and atonement, as the basis of the work of the Spirit just described (ver. 13): 'No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.' These words plainly imply divinity. We might only

in proof of this refer to Prov. xxx. 4,—a passage the close resemblance of which to the present we cannot but notice: 'Who hath ascended up into heaven or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?' Not only is He described as having come down from heaven—an expression used in the Old Testament for God alone, and in accordance with the description of His original dignity, as 'with God'<sup>1</sup> (John i. 1, 2),—but He is described as in heaven while here, and as again to ascend to the same state. As Hengstenberg remarks: 'All three designations imply the same dignity. Each of itself leads to the conception of full divinity, which makes itself known in the past, the present, and the future of the Son of God.'

But while thus divine, and in a subsequent verse called the Son of God, He is next described as the Son of man, and as in that nature making atonement (vers. 14, 15): 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.' Thus, in explanation to Nicodemus of the work of the Spirit,

<sup>1</sup> πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, not παρά.

our Saviour begins to unfold heavenly things, by exhibiting His own divinity and atonement in our nature, as the basis on which it rests.

But from this account of the work of the second person of the Trinity in our salvation, the Saviour leads back to the Father, as the source and fountain of the whole (ver. 16) : ' For God (plainly the Father, as contrasted with the Son) so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten SON, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' The words at the close of verses 15 and 16, ' that whosoever believeth on Him,' are the same *verbatim* in both ; but it will be seen that in the one case they are applied to the Son, as expressing the object of His work, and in the other to the Father.

Thus the whole passage presents not only three divine persons concurring in man's salvation, but indicates their official relation to each other in that work, and to those for whom they interposed. Beginning with the work of the Spirit upon the heart, the Saviour traces it back to the work of the Son in descending from heaven, assuming human nature, and dying as an atonement for sin ; and then He traces the work of the Son back to the love of the Father as its original source. In this, then, the first full announcement of the heavenly things which He

came down from heaven to reveal—the key-note of His whole teaching, unfolding the central mystery of His kingdom, and containing the very marrow of His glad tidings,—how plainly does the doctrine of the Trinity form the foundation of the whole structure!

## OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

In now proceeding to consider the life and teaching of our Lord during His public ministry, we must observe that the first three Evangelists, exhibiting especially the human side of Christ, do not so prominently bring forward either His divinity or the relations, internal or official, of the three persons in the Trinity. But the Gospel by John was plainly intended, among other designs, to be supplementary to them, and especially to exhibit the person of Christ as God incarnate. 'These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name' (ch. xx. 31). With this view, both in the description given of His works, and in the reports of His discourses, he portrays Him, not in any of His aspects as human, but as the manifestation of a divine person in human form,—in fact, as one in

nature with the Father, but at the same time occupying a place of official subordination to Him. He does, indeed, abundantly teach His manhood, and exhibit it in aspects which, but for his gospel, would be comparatively in the shade. But yet almost every step of his narrative indicates a special design to set forth Christ in His original divine personality, as the Eternal Word and the only begotten Son of God; not merely in the sense of God having no other such Son, but in the sense of His being partaker of the divine essence, and thus distinct from all created existence (ch. v. 18, x. 30-36, etc.). Hence He is represented as having a perfect knowledge of the Father (ch. viii. 55, x. 15), as well as knowing the hearts of men (ch. ii. 24, 25). His works are the works of God (ch. x. 37, xiv. 10). Whoever had seen Him had seen the Father (ch. xiv. 9). Men are to honour Him as they honour the Father (ch. v. 23); and whosoever hates and rejects Him, hates and rejects the Father (ch. xv. 23, 24). But while thus one with the Father, He is, throughout the same discourses, represented as occupying a place of official subordination to Him in the economy of our redemption (ch. iii. 16, 17, v. 43, vi. 37-40, viii. 42, xii. 49). The synoptists, though in the main exhibiting Christ's humanity, yet present it as the humanity of Him who was really the Son of God

(Matt. iii. 17, xi. 27, xvii. 5 ; Mark i. 1, 11, ix. 7, xii. 6, etc.), and agree with John in teaching His divinity. For example, no passage even in John's Gospel teaches this truth more strongly than the declaration of our Saviour, as given by the first and third Evangelists (Matt. xi. 27 ; Luke x. 22) : ' No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.'

But at the same time there are hints, in connection with the working of the Father and the Son, of the agency of the Spirit ;—as when the miracles of our Lord are described as by the finger of God, and in the parallel passage as by the Spirit of God (Matt. xii. 28, with Luke xi. 20) ;—as when the Saviour promises the Spirit to them that ask Him (Luke xi. 20) ;—but especially when our Saviour promises living water, which, the Evangelist says, ' He spake of the Spirit, which was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified ' (John vii. 38, 39) ; and again, when warning those who blasphemed His miracles, He pointed them forward to the time when the dispensation of the Spirit, the last person of the Trinity, should begin, and when, if they should continue to resist, their destruction would be inevitable (Matt. xii. 28-31 ; Luke xi. 13-20).

Our Lord having during His ministry, especially

as exhibited by John, represented His relations to the Father as essentially one with Him, but in His mission to our world subordinate to Him, began, as He approached the termination of His work on earth, more fully to unfold the relation of the Spirit to the Father and the Son, both essential and economical. Especially in His farewell discourses He exhibits the third person of the Trinity personally as proceeding from the first and second ; and in His official character, as given by the Father and dispensed by the Son, as the result of His departure to the Father by His death and resurrection, and as carrying out the work of the Son by applying it to the minds and hearts of men. The passages on this subject are so clear and distinct that they belong rather to the direct evidence for the Trinity, and we need do little more than quote them.

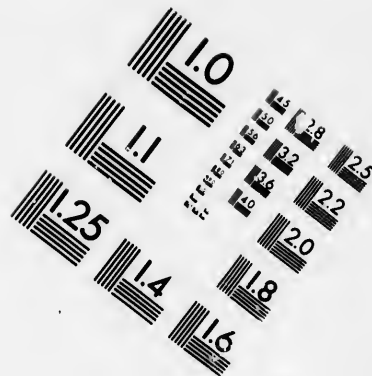
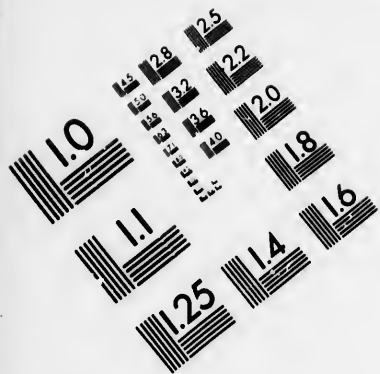
‘ I will pray the FATHER, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever ; even the SPIRIT of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him : but ye know Him ; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you ’ (John xiv. 16, 17). ‘ But the Comforter, which is the HOLY GHOST, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you ’ (ver. 26). ‘ But

when the COMFORTER is come, whom I will send unto you from the FATHER, He shall testify of me' (ch. xv. 26). 'It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' . . . 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come.' . . . 'All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you' (ch. xvi. 7-15).

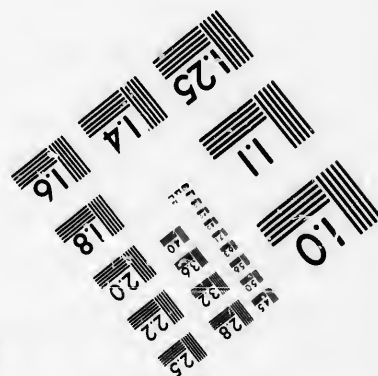
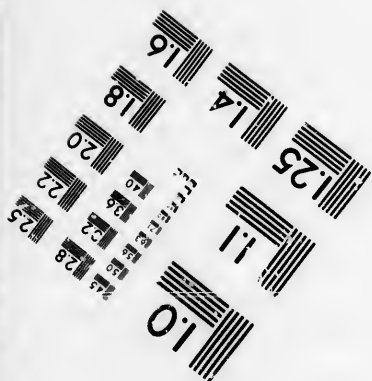
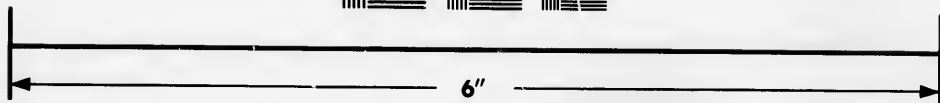
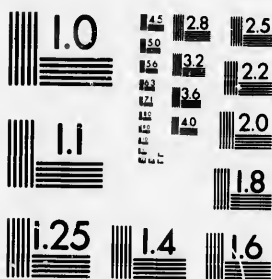
We need not enter into any discussion as to the proper meaning of the term translated 'Comforter.' It is sufficient to notice the general teaching of all these passages. They represent the place of the three divine persons in the actual carrying out of the plan of mercy in the world. First, we have the Spirit as the great agent, leading men into all truth, testifying of the Son, receiving of the Son's and showing it unto men, convincing the world of sin, etc., dwelling in believers, and, through a preached gospel, producing moral changes, which are, in reality, greater works than the miracles of the







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Saviour. Secondly, we have all attributed to the Father as the original source. 'The Father will give;' 'Whom the Father will send,' etc. And then, thirdly, we have the Son, as the great medium through whom the Spirit's influences are obtained, and who dispenses them as the agent of the Father. 'The Father will send in my name;' 'I will pray the Father, and He shall give;' 'Whom I will send unto you from the Father.'

Now, the order pursued in the Gospel history, as completed by John, in treating of the respective relations and offices in redemption of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is exactly that which would be adopted by a Trinitarian professor of systematic theology. Were he discussing the part of each of the three persons of the Trinity in our salvation, would he not first treat of the person and work of the Son in obtaining redemption; and in considering this, would he not speak of the Father as the source of all—as sending the Son, and as He to whom the Son holds in redemption a position of official subordination; of the Son, in His undertaking the work, becoming the servant of the Father, and laying down His life for the sheep; and perhaps incidentally refer to the Spirit? And then, would he not, as the second great division of his subject, treat fully of the application of the work by the

Spirit, first, in His mission as given by the Father, and dispensed by the Son; and, secondly, in His powerful agency, by which men are brought to the enjoyment of the redemption purchased? If so, how entirely accordant is the evangelical scheme with the representation given in the Gospel history of the person, life, and teaching of the Son of God!

## AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

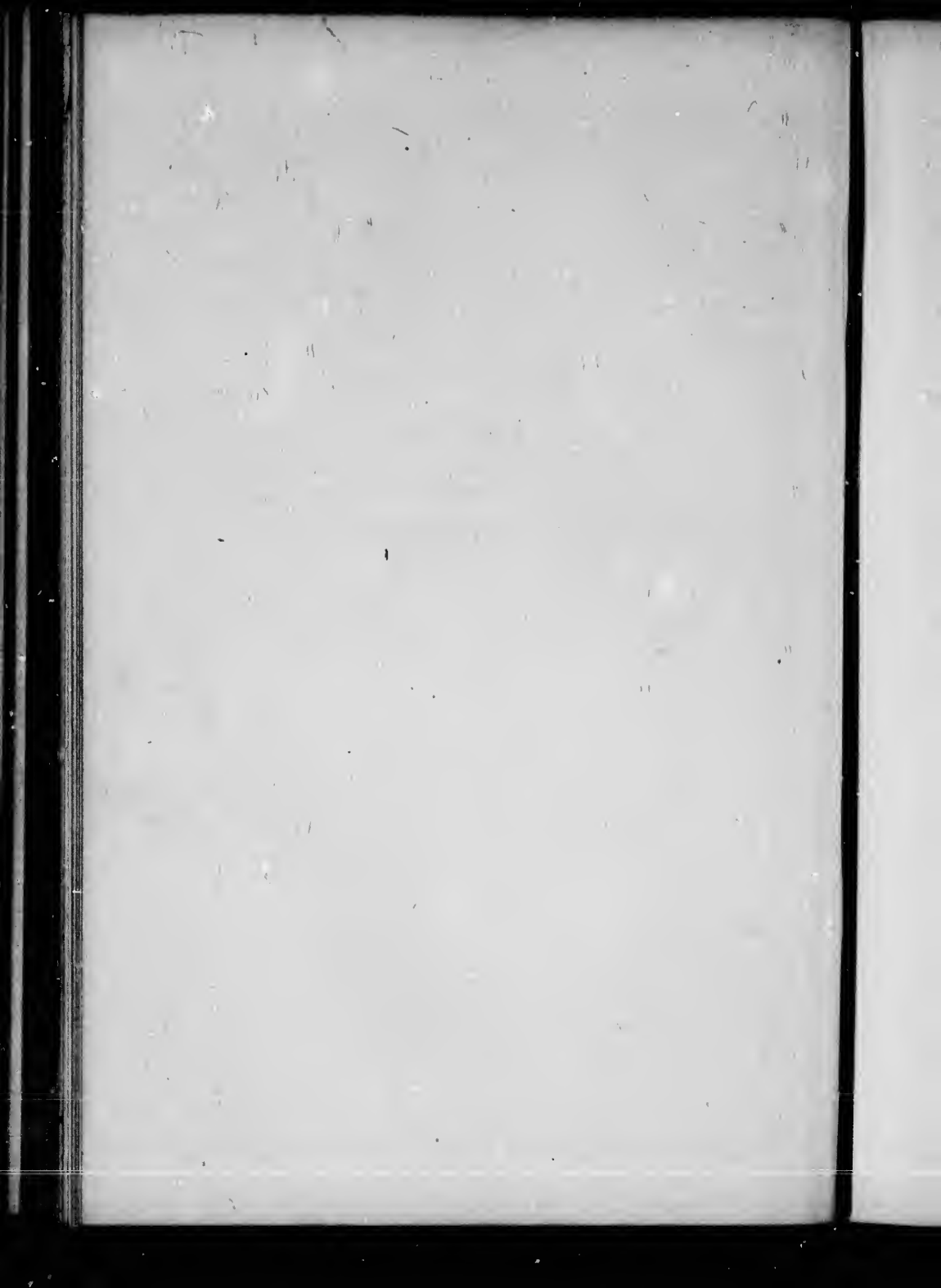
Our Lord, after His resurrection, renewed the promise of the Spirit in similar terms, giving to each of the three the same position as in the words already quoted (Luke xxiv. 49): 'Behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.' This promise of the Father, both from the passages last quoted, and from Acts i. 4, 5, where it is exactly defined, is abundantly shown to be the influences of the Holy Ghost. As a prelude and earnest of this, our Lord, as His practice was, gave the beginning and first-fruits on earth of what He was afterward fully to give from heaven (John xx. 21, 22): 'Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my FATHER hath sent ME, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive

ye the HOLY GHOST.' The Father appears as supreme, and sending the Son. The Son is represented as sending the apostles, in the same manner as the Father had sent Him, implying equal authority; but in addition, in the act of breathing upon them, He is exhibited as placing Himself in the same relation to the new spiritual world which Jehovah Elohim held in the formation of the material world, and the living creatures upon it, but especially as to the life of man. 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth' (Ps. xxxiii. 6). 'The Spirit of the Lord hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life' (Job xxxiii. 4). As, at first, Jehovah breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and formed him in the divine image; so now Jesus, at the founding of the new spiritual world, breathes upon the apostles, as the representatives of the Church, thus exhibiting the infusion of the new life in them by the Spirit, as well as in those who should afterward believe on Him through their word. By the first breathing, the first Adam became a living soul; but in the last, the second Adam appears as a quickening Spirit, the source of life to all the members of His body, a position implying fulness of divinity. This breathing in connection with the Greek title of the

Spirit (*πνεῦμα*), as meaning breath, seems also to express the original relation of the Spirit to the Son as proceeding from Him. And thus we have the three persons of the Trinity brought before us in this preliminary communication of the Spirit, in their essential divinity and official relations.

Having thus qualified His apostles for their work or given them an earnest of all needed qualifications, He gave them His parting commission, constituting them His agents to reclaim an apostate world to its rightful Sovereign. But in this commission all the germs of the doctrine of the Trinity, which had previously only partially expanded, burst into full efflorescence. All the faith which, as reclaimed, men are called to profess, all the obligations which they are bound to assume, and all the privileges which they are permitted to enjoy, are 'summarily comprehended' in their consecration to, and union with, the Triune God, as revealed in the gospel (Matt. xxviii. 19): 'Go ye therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them into' (not 'in') 'the name' (not names, but in the singular, the name—the revealed relation) 'of THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.'

To God the Father, God the Son,  
And God the Spirit, three in one,  
Be honour, praise, and glory given,  
By all on earth, and all in heaven.





PART III.



THE APOSTLES;

OR,

THE REVELATION OF THE SPIRIT.



*'All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.'* —1 COR. XII. 11.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

**W**E now proceed to consider the third great division of the word of God, which contains the manifestation of the Holy Ghost. The remaining portions of the sacred volume represent the completion of redemption by His agency, commenced on the day of Pentecost, and completed in final glory. Here our attention is first called to the second treatise of Luke, usually known as the Acts of the Apostles, which is a history of the fulfilment of the promise of the Spirit, first by His effusion upon the apostles, and then, secondly, through means of them, as thus qualified, by His working upon mankind in the order appointed by divine wisdom, upon the Jew first and afterwards upon the Gentiles, until the gospel had taken root in certain great centres of the old world, beginning at Jerusalem and ending at Rome. Now, in both these aspects of the Spirit's work, the writer recognises the three persons in the Godhead in the same

manner as is done in the Gospel history. The beginning of the first chapter is linked to the conclusion of his former treatise. At the conclusion of his Gospel it was said, 'Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high' (Luke xxiv. 49). And he commences his second treatise with the same fact: 'Being assembled together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the FATHER, which, saith He, ye have heard of ME. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the HOLY GHOST not many days hence' (Acts i. 4, 5). Thus, by the agency of the Spirit promised by the Father, and now to be actually given by Him, but dispensed through the Son, they were to be qualified as His agents for the establishment of His kingdom throughout the world. Accordingly, at His parting from them to return to the Father, which was necessary in order to open the way for the effusion of the Spirit, He said (ver. 8), 'Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.'

Accordingly, on the day of Pentecost, when the

Spirit was poured out from on high with such glorious effects, the Apostle Peter fully explains the phenomenon, if we may be allowed the expression, by describing the action of the three persons in the Godhead in what had just transpired. First, he refers it all to God the Father as its original source, now fulfilling His promise by the prophets: 'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy' (Acts ii. 16, 17). Secondly, he considers the ground of it, viz. the humiliation and death, and the consequent resurrection and exaltation, of the Son, whose work, however, is still of the Father, who hath both delivered Him up to death, and raised Him again from the dead: 'Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it' (vers. 22-24). And then, thirdly, as the result, he describes the giving of the Spirit by the Father, and the effusion of His influences by the Son, as the actual cause of that remarkable manifestation of which they had just been witnesses: '*Therefore* being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the FATHER the promise of the HOLY GHOST, HE (Christ) hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear' (ver. 33). The same pouring out is here ascribed to Christ, which is in the 17th verse ascribed to God, and we have already remarked that such a power requires divinity for its exercise. It will thus be seen that the foundation of the infant Church was laid, and the work of evangelizing the world begun, in accordance with the promise of the Saviour, by the concurrence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The work as thus begun was, according to the order appointed by divine wisdom, at first carried on specially among the Jews, to whom the first offer of salvation was made; but when the next great step in carrying out the counsels of eternal love was to be taken, by the evangelization of the Gentiles, the commencement of the work was sig-

nalized in a similar manner. God made choice among the apostles that the Gentiles by the mouth of Peter should hear the word of the gospel and believe (Acts xv. 7). Accordingly, at Cæsarea, he preached to Cornelius, and those in his house, Jesus Christ and Him crucified; and it is to be noted that in doing so he teaches the agency of the Blessed Three in the person and qualifications of the God-man Mediator, in the same manner as we have seen done by prophets and evangelists: 'GOD anointed JESUS of Nazareth with the HOLY GHOST and with power' (ch. x. 38). As the apostle went on to preach salvation through faith in Him, the Holy Ghost fell on those assembled, as originally upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost. Describing the scene that ensued, Peter acknowledges the agency of the whole three persons of the Godhead in terms similar to those in which he describes the first effusion: 'As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the HOLY GHOST. Forasmuch then as GOD gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the LORD JESUS, what was I that I should withstand God?' (ch. xi. 15-17.)

Thus the work now begun, of evangelizing the

Gentiles, as formerly in the case of the Jews, is recognised, as by the agency of the Holy Ghost, given by the Father, and by implication, if not directly expressed, through the medium of the Son. These events form the key-notes of the two great divisions of the book, which is simply the record of the primitive successful preaching of the gospel among Jews and Gentiles successively, as the result of the effusion of the Spirit upon both classes, in the manner described, as begun on these two occasions. The early Church, as thus planted among Jews and Gentiles, and whose progress from Jerusalem to Rome is traced in this book, was the first-fruits of the harvest of the world; and thus the representation given of the foundation of the work, in its two great divisions, exhibits the whole process of gathering souls into the New Testament Church till the end of time, as by the concurrent action of the adorable Three, in the order and relation predicted by our Saviour during His earthly ministry—the Spirit, as the great agent in the work; the Son, as securing His influences by His death and resurrection, and actually dispensing them; and the Father, as the great source of all, who imparts them as the reward of the work of the Son.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE EARLIER EPISTLES OF PAUL.

**O**UR Saviour taught His disciples the truth as they were able to bear it. But even up to the time of His departure to the Father, they were not prepared to receive the full revelation of God's will, which He designed to communicate. 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' Accordingly, the Spirit was promised, and after His resurrection imparted, to guide His disciples into all truth. We must therefore look for the ripest fruits of inspiration in the writings of the apostles. Among these the Epistles of Paul occupy a prominent place, and deserve our first consideration.

Before proceeding to consider the doctrine of the Trinity, as underlying Paul's teaching of salvation, we must make two preliminary remarks. First, We must notice, as a peculiarity of his style, the length to which he sometimes draws out his sentences. In the fulness of his heart, thought succeeds thought,

clause is added to clause, and one parenthesis follows another, till the apostle pauses, as it were, to take breath. When we examine such passages more closely, as Alford remarks, 'depths under depths disclose themselves, wonderful systems of parallel allusion, frequent and complicated underplots;' but, as he also adds, 'every word, the more we search, approves itself as set in its exact logical place; we see every phrase contributing, by its own organization and articulation, to the carrying out of the organic whole.' Yet, to ascertain the general design, the interpreter must often glance over a passage of considerable length, and, by seizing the salient points, endeavour to catch the leading thoughts; and after that, the various subsidiary clauses, both as to the truths they teach, and their relation to each other and to the apostle's general argument, will remain as a rich field of inquiry. In the present investigation, as we will be endeavouring to unravel something like what Alford calls 'an underplot,' we shall only be able to trace the general course of thought in the passages to be considered; and in doing so, we hope to exhibit the working of a Triune God often appearing as a sort of undertone, which, amid the richness and harmony of the leading voices, is apt to be overlooked.

The other general remark we have to make is,

that while, in the writings of John, the usual titles of the Trinity are Father, Son, and Spirit; in Paul's they are God, Lord, and Spirit. We do not say that this is always the case, but it certainly is the prevailing usage of both writers. We presume to think that this simple fact has an important bearing on theological questions, which are agitated at the present day, and that it is not without design that John was raised up specially to exhibit the paternal character and paternal relation of God, and that Paul should have been raised up to exhibit Him more in His rectoral relation to His creatures—as their Lawgiver and Ruler. This is, however, beside our subject, and we merely wish to notice here the general practice of the Apostle of the Gentiles. With him the title God is used to denote the Father, or God absolutely. It is the equivalent of the Hebrew *Elohim*, and very often has connected with it such titles as 'the Father,' or 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' That he commonly used the title Lord, or *Kyrios*, again, to denote the Son, is admitted by all commentators. So generally is this the case, that we are never without good reason to ascribe it to any other; and, as it is the title used in the Septuagint as the equivalent of Jehovah, its use is a clear testimony to our Lord's divinity. We make the remark regarding these titles now, that we may not have to

discuss them in reference to each particular passage that may come under review.

Keeping these remarks in view, we proceed to consider the Epistles of Paul in the order in which they were written.

#### THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS.

The earliest of Paul's epistles, the first to the Thessalonians; commences with thanksgiving for their faith, hope, and love. 'We give thanks to God always for you all; making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope' (vers. 2, 3). But he immediately connects their present privileges with the three persons of the Trinity, in their respective relations to the sinner's salvation,—first, as enjoyed in union with the Son: 'In our LORD Jesus Christ, in the sight of GOD the FATHER;' but, secondly, as originating in their election by the Father: 'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of GOD;' and then, thirdly, as manifested by the working of the Spirit: 'For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the HOLY GHOST, and in much assurance.' We may notice in this passage, what we shall see again,

the mention of the three cardinal graces, faith, hope, and love, in connection with the mention of the three adorable names. Here they are all referred to the Son, as the object of them, but before God the Father, with a view to Him, or with reference to His glory.

It is worthy of mention, that in the verses immediately following, in which the apostle enlarges on the fruits of the gospel among the Thessalonians, and, as a proof of their election, exhibits their character, he describes it in relation to the three persons of the Trinity (vers. 6-9): 'And ye became followers of us, and of the LORD, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the HOLY GHOST; so that . . . in every place your faith to GOD-ward is spread abroad; . . . and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and the true God, and to wait for His SON from heaven;' showing by the relation to the Son, that it is the Father who is spoken of in the previous clause. The reference here to the Trinity is not so distinct as in many other passages; but the mention of the three persons successively is worthy of our attention.

In the second epistle we have a similar expression of thanksgiving (ch. ii. 13, 14): 'We' (*i.e.* the ministers of the gospel) 'are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord,' in contrast with those under antichristian delusion

mentioned in the previous verses, 'because GOD hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the SPIRIT, and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.' In thus describing the grounds of his thanksgiving, the apostle mentions, first, their election, ascribed to God;—but it is the Father who sustains the honours of Deity, and in particular to Him is ascribed the sovereignty of election, however the other members of the Godhead may concur in it: 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight;'—then, secondly, sanctification by the Holy Ghost: 'Through' or 'in sanctification of the Spirit,' the great agent in renewing the soul;—and thirdly, their ultimate salvation: 'To the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The glory here is the glory which He originally possessed with the Father, ere ever the world was, and with which He is now glorified. In this passage the work of the Son as to our present salvation is not so distinctly mentioned as elsewhere, although allusion is made to it in the expression, 'Belief of the truth;' yet the apostle, in his ascription of praise, embraces the three, by referring to the ultimate condition of God's children, as associated with Him in His glory (John xvii. 24; Rom. viii. 17). Thus we have election by the Father, sancti-

fication by the Spirit, and glorification with the Son.

Reverting to the practical part of the first epistle, we may notice one or two passages in which the three are associated with Christian duty. In the fourth chapter the apostle exhorts his readers against certain gross sins as inconsistent with the purity of a Christian profession; but the apostle's strong ground of appeal is the relation in which the three divine persons respectively stand to them in the work of their salvation (vers. 6-8): 'Because that THE LORD is the avenger of all such, as we have forewarned you, and testified.' Taking the term 'Lord' to denote Christ, as it usually does in Paul's writings, the apostle's first appeal to them is on the ground of His appointment to judge and punish iniquity. But he adds as a second, their calling by the Father (ver. 7): 'For GOD hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.' Thus in sinning they despise God, who hath called them, and who, in the person of Christ, is the judge (ver. 8): 'He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not men, but God.' And then he adds, as a third consideration, by which their guilt was intensified, and which forms the climax of his appeal, 'Who also hath given unto us the HOLY SPIRIT,' or, as the words stand in the original, 'His own Spirit, the Holy One,' expressing

with great emphasis and solemnity the character and work of Him whose attribute is holiness, and whose it is to sanctify all the servants of God. 'Observe that the whole passage agrees with and supports the doctrine of the Trinity,—the Lord (Jesus), God (the Father who calleth, Rom. viii. 30), and the Holy Spirit, being each represented as acting distinctly, and collectively spoken of as God.'<sup>1</sup>

The fifth chapter contains a number of exhortations seemingly detached; but yet a line of connection may be traced, even where they seem most disconnected! In examining these, it is interesting to observe that when he treats of religious worship, he exhibits it in relation to the three members of the Godhead (vers. 16–19): 'Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.' The word 'this' (τοῦτο) in the last clause seems properly to refer to the whole exercises just mentioned, the rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks, which have God as their object, and which, he adds, are His appointment to His creatures, but 'in Christ,' the only medium of manifestation on His part, and of acceptable approach on ours. This naturally leads to the actual source of these gifts, the enkindling flame of the third person of the Godhead; and

<sup>1</sup> Webster and Wilkinson *in loco*.



accordingly he adds (ver. 19): 'Quench not the SPIRIT,'—check not nor restrain His influences, as He awakens those feelings of gratitude and earnest desire which find their natural expression in praise to God, the author of the gospel, and the source of all blessings; but, according to God's will, as He is in Christ Jesus, give free vent to all such feelings. The words thus seem closely connected with what precedes, as well as with what follows; so that we have the three divine persons associated in the apostle's mind with his spiritual exercises, as their object, their medium, and their author.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.<sup>1</sup>

The Epistle to the Galatians was occasioned by the successful efforts of certain Jewish teachers to subvert the faith of that Church, by persuading them that the observance of the Mosaic ritual was necessary to salvation. As they thus contradicted Paul's teaching, they laboured at the same time to undermine his apostolic authority, and succeeded in turning the affections of the people from him. In

<sup>1</sup> It is still a matter of discussion among scholars whether the Epistle to the Galatians was written before or after those to the Corinthians, but the prevailing opinion at the present day is that it was the first written.

writing to them, therefore, the apostle first vindicates his office as an apostle. This he does in the form of an autobiographical narrative (ch. i. and ii.). Secondly, in opposition to false teachers, he establishes the truth of the fundamental doctrines, that justification is by faith and not by the deeds of the law, and that, as a consequence, they alone who are of faith are the children of God, and inheritors of the promises made to Abraham (ch. iii. and iv.). And then, thirdly, he concludes with practical exhortations and appeals (ch. v. and vi.).

Turning to the second portion, which, as teaching the way of salvation, specially bears on our subject, a careful examination will show the doctrine of the Trinity at the basis of the apostle's argument. In showing that justification is by faith, he, in the beginning of the third chapter, rests his argument on one question, viz. in what manner had they received the Spirit? 'This only would I learn of you,'—it is sufficient to settle the question,—'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' (ch. iii. 2.) Or, to put the question in another view, how had the Spirit been given or supplied? 'He therefore that ministereth to you' (or is bestowing the Spirit upon you, viz. God), 'doeth He it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' (ver. 5.)

To this question the paragraph from the 6th to the 14th verse is an answer. The scope of the whole is to show that the bestowment of the Spirit by God, and the receiving of it by us, are the result of justification, and that justification is through faith and not through legal obedience; and it may be regarded as one of the most exactly logical in the whole of the apostle's writings. There are three stages in his argument. First, he shows that God justified Abraham by faith (ver. 6): 'Even as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.' This, however, was as a type or example of the manner in which the saved of all ages and nations shall enjoy the same blessing (vers. 7-9): 'Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that GOD would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed,' etc. The second step in his argument is to show that the meritorious ground of this blessing is the work of Christ. This he does by showing, first negatively, that it cannot be our own obedience to the law, for, by its principles, we are under condemnation (vers. 10-12); and then positively, by showing that it is through the Son enduring the curse for us (ver. 13): 'Christ hath redeemed us from the

curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham, a free justification, 'might come upon the Gentiles through faith.' And then the third step is, that, as the result of this, we obtain the Spirit promised by the Father (ver. 14): 'That we might receive the promise of THE SPIRIT through faith.'

It will thus be seen that we have here the work of the blessed Three set forth in order, in exact accordance with the evangelical scheme: God the Father justifying and bestowing the Spirit; God the Son redeeming us from the curse of the law, and thus opening the way for the effusion of the Spirit; and God the Spirit promised by the Father, and, as the result of Christ's redeeming work, bestowed upon the children of men, and working out their salvation.

Following our redemption and justification comes adoption, and this the apostle connects with the three persons of the Trinity (ch. iv. 4-6): 'But when the fulness of the time was come, GOD sent forth His SON, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the SPIRIT of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.'

Here we have, first, God the Father, as is evident

from His being so addressed in verse 6, and also from His relation to the Son as sending Him forth. We have, secondly, the Son who is sent forth,—language implying that He was already the Son (John iii, 16; 1 John iv. 14),—and who is here represented as ‘becoming’ human, and being made under the law, that He might deliver us from its penalty by enduring it Himself, and thus introduce us into the privileges of God’s children. The establishment of the filial relation necessarily involves the completion of the filial character; and hence we have, thirdly, the Spirit sent forth into our hearts,—the same word, ‘sent forth,’ being used with reference to the Spirit as to the Son, implying the personality of the one as well as of the other. ‘There is thus triune operation—Father, Son, and Spirit—in providing, securing, and enjoying this adoption.’—*Eadie*.

The conclusion of the whole is stated in verse 7: ‘So, then, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.’ It must be observed that the Alexandrine and Vatican Codices, instead of Θεοῦ διὰ Χριστοῦ, ‘of God through Christ,’ read simply διὰ Θεοῦ, ‘through God.’ This is also the reading of the Vulgate and other ancient versions; and it is approved by Tischendorf, and other modern critical authorities. If this reading be adopted, the apostle will in this verse ascribe to God

the whole of what in the separate parts he had ascribed to the three persons in the Trinity. As Windischman, quoted by Alford, says, '*Διὰ Θεοῦ*, through God, combines, on behalf of our race, the whole before-mentioned agency of the blessed Trinity. The Father has sent the Son and the Spirit, the Son has freed us from the law, the Spirit has completed our sonship; and thus the redeemed are heirs through the Triune God Himself, not through the law, nor through fleshly descent.'

#### THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

The Epistles to the Corinthians are mainly practical. In them the apostle is not engaged in discussing formally any of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. He is entering into the active life of a local church, correcting its irregularities, and giving directions to its members in regard to several of their most important relations, ecclesiastical and social; and, under the guidance of divine wisdom, is laying down principles of universal application, for the regulation of the practical working of the Church in all ages. Yet in these, throughout, the apostle exhibits the Son in a manner irreconcilable with His being a mere creature; and, in various

passages, speaks of the Holy Ghost in terms which imply His personality and divinity, and thus clearly establishes the doctrine of a Triune God. But by our plan we notice only those passages in which the three are mentioned in connection.

At the beginning of the first epistle, in consequence of objections that had arisen among some members of the church against the apostle, he defends his preaching both as to its matter and manner; and it is interesting to observe how, in a way that we might consider fortuitous, only that we believe that there is nothing in the language or structure of the word of God but what was designed in infinite wisdom, he brings in the three persons in order. Thus, at the beginning of the second chapter, describing his manner of preaching, he says (ch. ii. 1-5): 'And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of GOD. For I determined not to know anything among you, save JESUS CHRIST, and Him crucified. . . . And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of THE SPIRIT and of power; that your faith might not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.' Here we have, first, the great subject of the apostle's preaching—'the testimony of God;' either

the testimony about God, or, as we think more likely, the testimony which God has given regarding His Son (1 John v. 9); in other words, the revelation of the plan of salvation through Him. Then, secondly, we have the matter of his preaching—'Christ and Him crucified'—connected with the previous verse by 'for.' It is God's testimony, because this, and this alone, was the apostle's great theme. And then, thirdly, we have the agent by which this truth is rendered effectual—the Spirit of God, so that its efficacy was of divine power: 'That your faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.'

Now, this passage does not assert a Trinity, nor does it assert that each or either of the three persons is God. But it will be seen how entirely it accords with the evangelical scheme. Here are the three persons mentioned, and not only so, but referred to in terms which imply at least unrivalled honour; Christ Himself the central subject, the apostle's whole philosophy, and His whole gospel; and the Spirit securing His success, so that it is accomplished not by human power, but is actually a divine work.

Having in his previous argument strongly represented the vanity of human wisdom, it might have been objected that the gospel was opposed to science, and even to that wisdom which is so commended in the Old Testament. The apostle obviates this in



the verses following, by showing that the system which he preached was indeed the wisdom of God, and so regarded by those who were competent to appreciate it (ver. 6): 'We speak wisdom among them that are perfect.' But it is interesting to observe how again the apostle exhibits it in relation to the three persons in the Godhead. First, the Father had appointed it for bringing us to glory, but still in His sovereignty kept it long concealed, while to the wise of this world it is still unknown (ver. 7): 'We speak the wisdom of GOD in a mystery, even the hidden, which God ordained before the world to our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew.' Their ignorance appears in their treatment of the Son, who is next set forth as the great subject and substance of this divine revelation (ver. 8): 'For had they known it, they would not have crucified the LORD OF GLORY,'—a title which we need not say implies His divinity. Then, after a quotation showing their ignorance of His glory, he, in the third place, introduces as the agent by whom the truth is actually revealed to us, the Spirit, who knows God in all the profoundest depths of His being, counsel, and operation (ver. 10): 'But God hath revealed them unto us by His SPIRIT; for the Spirit searcheth,' or explores, 'all things, yea, the deep things of God;' an expression, we need scarcely

remark, strongly expressive of His personality, as well as of His supreme divinity.

The apostle then goes on to describe the condition of believers, as thus spiritually enlightened; and still again, in the course of his illustration, refers to the sacred Three. He acknowledges the Spirit as the great agent in producing this light, but as proceeding from God, the source of all spiritual gifts (ver. 12): 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the SPIRIT which is of GOD; that we may know the things that are freely given us of God.' And thus, in contrast with the natural man, they are capable of judging in spiritual things, and others are incapable of judging them, because they have the mind of Christ, the Jehovah of the Old Testament (ver. 16): 'For who hath known the mind of the LORD, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.'

Could such references to the Three in their mutual relations, and in their respective working for man's salvation, come from any mind except one not only believing in the doctrine of the Trinity, but whose whole religious feelings and exercises were moulded by it?

In the third chapter, referring to the divisions among them, under the names of certain teachers, he shows the real position of himself and other

labourers in the Church, as builders in the house of God. This leads him to speak of the Church as a building; and in doing so, he describes it in its relation to the three persons in the Godhead. First, God the Father is the owner, the originator, and the real builder (ver. 9): 'Ye are GOD'S husbandry, ye are GOD'S building.' Then he points out Christ as the only foundation (ver. 11): 'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is CHRIST JESUS.' His person and work form the only ground of confidence for the salvation of men, and thus the only basis on which the Church stands. After showing the great responsibility resting upon those who are employed as fellow-workers with God, in the erection of this building, on account of its being God's building, and Christ being the only foundation, he next describes its sacred character by representing it as a temple consecrated to God, through the inhabitation of the Spirit (ver. 16): 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the SPIRIT of God dwelleth in you?'—a passage directly teaching the divinity of the Holy Ghost. This being the character of the Church, he warns his readers against dishonouring it, either by unholiness, or reliance on human wisdom;—and then he leads back again to the second person of the Trinity, and from Him to the first. All teachers, all institutions, and all

events, are for the sake of the Church, and subserve her interests (ver. 21): 'Therefore let no one glory in men: for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.' But this is as they belong to Christ, having been purchased by His blood, to whom they are subject, and through whom they are possessors of all things: 'And ye are Christ's.' Yet even He is in subordination to the Father, to whose glory through Him all things tend: 'And Christ is God's.' Thus in this passage, describing the Church as a building, he begins with its source as from the Father, 'of whom are all things,' and traces it downward, through the work of the Son in laying its foundation, to the work of the Spirit. But he then, as it were, retraces his course, and, ascending upward, connects the work of building the Church, in all its machinery of means and agencies, with the Son, as the head of all, and through Him with the Father, 'of whom are all things.'

In the sixth chapter there is a strong and beautiful appeal on behalf of Christian purity, and a careful examination will show this great doctrine underlying the whole of the apostle's argument. In verse 11 he says, 'Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the

SPIRIT of our GOD.' For our present purpose, it is not necessary to enter into a discussion as to the precise meaning of the terms translated 'washed,' etc. It is sufficient that the general meaning is admitted to be, that we are freed both from guilt and pollution. The point which we have to notice is, that here again the three persons in the Trinity are represented as engaged in the production of this great change. It is through the medium of the Son: 'In the name of the Lord Jesus;'—it is effected by the Holy Ghost: 'And by the Spirit of our God.' But the Father is referred to, not only as He is the author of justification, but directly in these last words, 'Spirit of *our God*;' that is, our reconciled God and Father, whose is the Spirit, and who sends Him according to His promise.

The remaining part of the chapter is devoted to a warning against the abuse of the doctrine of Christian liberty, particularly by the perversion of the body to impure purposes. We need not go over the apostle's statements in detail, but will select the salient points of his reasoning, which will show that his appeals are grounded on the relation in which Christians stand, even as to their bodies, to the members of the Godhead respectively. First, our bodies are for Christ, and for them as well as for our souls He was constituted the Saviour (ver. 13):

'The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.' By His blood they have been redeemed (ver. 20): 'Ye are bought with a price;' and they are now united to Him, as members of His body, and consequently are one in spirit with Him. How inconsistent with such a relation is all uncleanness (vers. 15-17)! 'Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? What! know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith He, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.' But, secondly, they are the subjects of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, whose presence consecrates them as a temple to the Lord; and with this high and holy relation, such a vice is equally inconsistent (ver. 19): 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the HOLY GHOST, which is in you?' And then, thirdly, all this is from and to God the Father. He it is who will raise up the body (ver. 14): 'God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power.' He it is that dispenses the Spirit (ver 19), 'which is in you, which ye have of God.' And as He has thus redeemed us by the blood of His Son, and taken possession of us by His Spirit, we are bound to hold ourselves devoted to His glory, with which all

sensual indulgence is utterly irreconcilable (vers. 19, 20): 'The Holy Ghost in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your bodies,'—and if the concluding clause be genuine, which is doubtful, it is added—'in your spirits, which are God's.'

What an ineffable grandeur is thus given to an appeal against the indulgence of sensual appetites, by the relation in which we are brought in redemption to each of the three persons in the Godhead; and how exalted is Christianity above every other system of religion, and the evangelical scheme above every pretended form of Christianity, as an agent for securing holiness, by the awful sublimity of its motives, and the overpowering majesty of its appeals!

In the twelfth chapter the apostle discusses the spiritual gifts bestowed on the Church; but he views them mainly as they are related to the three persons of the Godhead. Whatever variety might be among them, he asserts that, as gifts or graces, they were wrought by the one Spirit; as ministrations or services, they were by the authority of the one Lord; and as to their origin, they were all from the Father (vers. 4-6): 'Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same SPIRIT. And there are diversities of administrations, but the same LORD. And there are

diversities of operations, but it is the same GOD that worketh all in all.'

'Thus we have,' says Alford, 'GOD THE FATHER, the first source of all spiritual influence in all; GOD THE SON, the ordainer in His Church of all ministries, by which this influence may be legitimately brought out for edification; GOD THE HOLY GHOST, dwelling and working in the Church, and effectuating in each man such measures of His gifts as He sees fit.' 'Once,' says Wordsworth, 'are these three known thus solemnly to have met at the creation of the world; once again at the baptism, at the new creating it. And here now, the third time, at the baptism of the Church with the Holy Ghost. Where, as the manner is at all baptisms, each bestows a several gift or largess on the party baptized, that is, on the Church, for whom and for whose good the world itself was created, and the Holy Ghost visibly sent down.'

This passage is frequently quoted as proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, and we need not dwell upon it, as it may be regarded as rather affording direct testimony on the subject. But it has not been generally noticed, that in the remaining part of the chapter, in which the apostle discusses the whole question of spiritual gifts, he considers them in their relation to each of the three divine persons. succes-



sively, in the same order as above stated ; and, moreover, that his arguments are simply an illustration and confirmation of the three propositions which he had just laid down. First he shows, in the paragraph from the 7th to the 11th verse, that 'there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.' He describes the various gifts bestowed upon the members of the Church (vers. 8-10) : 'To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit,' etc. And then he adds (ver. 11), 'But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.'

Then, secondly, he treats of their relation to the Son, showing, in the paragraph from the 12th to the 27th verse, that while 'there are diversities of ministrations, it is the same Lord.' He is the head of the one body, of which all believers are members (ver. 12) : 'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body ; so also is Christ.' And then he shows, that as in the natural body each member has its own office, and that, with all the variety among them as to their uses and their importance, each one is necessary, each belongs to the body, and serves its purpose for the good of the whole ; so in the Church, each member, however humble his position, has his

place in the body of Christ, is necessary to the symmetry and proper working of the whole, and in his own place serves an important end for the welfare of the body, and thus ministers to Christ its head; so that, as he says to them (ver. 27), 'they are the body of Christ, and members in particular.'

And then, thirdly, he considers their relation to the Father, showing, from the 28th to the 30th verse, that 'there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all.' All is by the sovereign appointment of the Father, who has appointed the various offices, through which these gifts are exercised. 'And God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles,' etc.

Thus the whole chapter contains a discussion of the relation of spiritual gifts to each of the three persons in the Trinity in order, as produced by the Spirit, ministered by the Son, and appointed by the Father.

#### THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Turning to the second epistle, we notice, at chapter i. 21, 22, a beautiful passage, in which the doctrine of the Trinity is implied. The subject is the estab-

lishment and confirmation of believers in the faith. In the verse immediately preceding, the apostle had represented Christ as the truth and substance of the divine promises (ver. 20): 'All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.' However numerous, or however glorious, through Him they are rendered absolutely certain, and their fulfilment secured. But in the following verses, he ascribes the work in us, by which we are established in the firm conviction of the truth of God's promises and the assurance of our interest in them, to the blessed Three, each performing His appropriate work. 'Now He which stablisheth us with you in CHRIST, and hath anointed us, is GOD; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the SPIRIT in our hearts.' Here, as usual, all is traced to God the Father as its source: 'He which stablisheth us with you is God.' But this is 'in Christ,' in reference to Him, in union with Him, in whom all the divine promises are confirmed (ver. 20). And, lastly, the agent by whom this is effected is the Spirit: 'Who also hath given to us the earnest of the Spirit.' His work is also described in the phrase 'anointed us,' as we know from other passages (Luke iv. 18, with Isa. lxi. 1; Acts iv. 27, x. 38, etc.). It is by Him also that we are sealed (Eph. i. 13, 14, iv. 30).

Indeed, the concluding clause, 'hath given us the earnest of the Spirit,' is but exegetical or explanatory of the sealing; so that the confirmation of the believer is effected by the power of the whole blessed Three, working in the same order, and in the same relation as in the other parts of our salvation.

It is worthy of notice, that in passages of less importance, and teaching no great doctrinal truth, the apostle sometimes introduces the three persons in the Godhead, as if his mind in all its movements was constantly recurring to the idea of a Triune God working in all things. Thus, speaking of the success of his ministry among the Corinthians, he says (ch. iii. 3): 'Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of CHRIST, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the SPIRIT of the living GOD;' thus recognising Christ as the author of the change in them—a divine work wrought through the instrumentality of the apostle, and by the agency of the Spirit, who is of the Father, here styled the living God.

In the following verses the apostle describes his qualifications as a minister of the gospel, but he refers them expressly to the first and second persons of the Godhead, and by implication to the third. Such was his confidence in the divinity and glory of his mission, and his efficiency for the apostleship, that he was not ashamed in the presence of

God, much less before his opposers in Corinth; but this confidence was 'through Christ,' by whom he had been called, whom he served, and by whom were dispensed all the needed qualifications for success (ver. 4): 'Such trust have we *through CHRIST* to God-ward.' But all his sufficiency was derived from God the Father as its source (ver. 5): 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of GOD,' who, he adds (ver. 6), 'hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the SPIRIT: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.' The primary reference of the word 'spirit' here seems to be to the New Testament dispensation; but it is to it as the dispensation of the Spirit, preached by men endowed with the 'Holy Ghost sent down from heaven' (1 Pet. i. 12),—especially as, after the glorification of the Saviour, the Spirit was poured out in copious measure, rendering the gospel triumphantly successful; so that its ministers, unlike those of the Old Testament, had to do, not so much with the presenting an objective law, but with the working of a divine agent upon the hearts of men. Hence the apostle, in his reasoning onward, passes naturally to the Spirit, as under the New Testament so gloriously diffusing life and light.

We would not wish to press an argument from the mere fact of the three persons of the Godhead being placed in juxtaposition in any part of the apostle's writings. It must be admitted that passages of this kind do not so distinctly indicate a Trinity, as those in which the three are introduced in the same sentence, or the same paragraph, in relation to one another, or as severally working out man's salvation. But even such a collocation, if we may use the term, of the three names is not without design. Passages of this kind are of interest, and we think have some bearing upon our subject, though not so direct, nor so forcible as others, such as we have been considering. There is a beautiful passage of this kind in the fifth chapter. Speaking of the hopes of believers beyond the present life, and their groaning under present burdens, with the earnest desire after future glory, he describes our relation to it by a reference to the concern which the three persons in the Godhead had in it. First, the Father has prepared us for it (ver. 5): 'Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God.' To Him is to be traced the whole process of renovation, through which we obtain everlasting happiness. Secondly, the Spirit is the present pledge of it: 'Who also hath given unto us the earnest of the SPIRIT.' And, thirdly, the comple-

tion of this happiness is in the enjoyment of the Son Himself (vers. 6, 8): 'We are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the LORD: we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.' It may not have been intended in this passage to express a relation among the members of the Godhead, as to the future glory of believers. But it is interesting to observe how, in treating this subject, the apostle refers to the Three individually; and surely the mere collocation of them in this manner is not without design, nor without importance.

The whole epistle concludes with what is the most solemn, the most regular, and the most complete of all Paul's forms of benediction; and accordingly universally selected as the one to be used by the Church in its worship. In this, commonly known as the Apostolic Benediction, the distinct personality and divinity of the Three are so clearly assumed, that the passage is commonly and justly quoted as affording direct evidence of the Trinity, and therefore we need not dwell upon it.

'THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY GHOST, BE WITH YOU ALL. AMEN.'

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

On turning to what may be regarded as the greatest, and which is certainly the most systematic of all Paul's epistles, that to the Romans, we observe in the introduction a passage, which at all events has an important bearing on the relation of the three persons in the Godhead (ch. i. 1-4): 'Paul, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of GOD, concerning His SON, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the SPIRIT OF HOLINESS, by the resurrection from the dead.' Here we have, first, God as the author of the gospel,—plainly the Father, as appears from the relation in which He stands to the Son; secondly, the subject of it, 'Concerning His Son, Jesus Christ;' and then we have what at first sight appears to be, and what is regarded, by a number of interpreters as the third person of the Trinity, spoken of as the 'Spirit of Holiness.' The majority of interpreters, however, at least in modern times, understand this phrase as denoting His divine nature. Their reason for this is its seeming to stand in contrast with the flesh in the previous member of the sentence, both being



preceded by the preposition *κατά*, according to. It appears natural to say that He is of the seed of David according to His human nature, and the Son of God according to His divine. Were there any instance in which the word *πνεῦμα*, translated Spirit, undoubtedly signifies the divine nature, and were there simply the two clauses in contrast, we should be prepared at once to adopt this interpretation. But in the other passages (1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 18) in which the word is supposed to denote Christ's divine nature, the meaning is at least questionable. Moreover, looking closely at the passage, we may observe that it does not present a simple antithesis of the two clauses. The title, 'Spirit of holiness,' is connected with two other phrases, 'in power,' and 'by the resurrection from the dead,' with which it must be explained. Now, though the words translated 'with power' may mean powerfully, yet undoubtedly the prevailing, if not the universal, use of the term is to express the efficiency of a living agent, and not the logical force of evidence; and it is especially used to denote the working of the Holy Ghost (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 8; Mark ix. 1; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5, etc.). Further, how Christ was declared to be or established as the Son of God in His divine nature by His resurrection, is not clear; but when we re-

member the connection of His resurrection (in which term frequently His whole exaltation is implied) with the giving of the Spirit, and the powerful working which followed, we are inclined to adopt the interpretation of those who regard the passage as expressing a contrast between His earthly or fleshly condition and His present exaltation, and who understand the words as meaning that He was declared or proved to be the Son of God, by the powerful operation of the Spirit of holiness, after and through His resurrection from the dead. This is certainly in accordance with the teachings both of the Old and New Testaments regarding the exaltation of the Son, and its connection with the outpouring of the Spirit. Undoubtedly, the extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit, in consequence of His resurrection and ascension, is among the highest and most glorious demonstrations that He was truly the Son of God. If this view were accepted, we would have in the passage a recognition of the three persons in the Trinity; but as the stream of modern interpreters is against us, we do not press it.

The body of the epistle, from ch. i. 16 to the end of ch. xi., may be regarded as a systematic treatise on the plan of salvation through the mediation of Christ, and that in its application to Jews and Gentiles. The theme is in ch. i. 17, 'The

gospel is the power of God unto salvation, unto every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek; and it is accordingly exhibited successively as the power of God for justification, for sanctification, and for glorification, while a subsidiary discussion follows, showing the relation of these blessings to Jew and Gentile. But we here find the doctrine of the Trinity, not so much underlying single passages, as really forming the substratum of the argument of the apostle.

Thus, in the first portion, from ch. i. 17 till nearly the end of ch. iii., we have God the Father, as the lawgiver, condemning the guilty; whose 'wrath is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men;' but who has yet sent His Son as a propitiation, through whose righteousness He justifies Jew and Gentile, as the equal Father of both. Then, in the second section, from ch. iii. 20 to the end of ch. v., we have the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our propitiation; who, by a work of righteousness beyond any human or created power, restores the rightful relations of man to God, and through whom eternal life is freely bestowed upon the children of men. And then, in the third section, from the beginning of ch. vi. to the end of ch. viii., we have the work of the Spirit in our deliverance from the dominion of sin, and our in-

roduction into a state of gracious service, ending in the complete renovation of our nature, and the full enjoyment of His glory hereafter. In this section the agency of the third person of the Trinity is exhibited, first in its relation to the work of the second, and then, secondly, in its actual exercise upon the souls of men, so that we 'walk in the Spirit,' 'are led by the Spirit,' 'have the Spirit dwelling in us,' etc.,—all ending in our final glorification.

Let the reader glance over the portion of the epistle thus reviewed, embracing the body of the apostle's doctrinal statements, and endeavour to seize its salient points, and we think that he cannot but observe the special offices of the three persons of the Godhead for man's salvation, set forth in the order of their subsistence and operation. Let him separate it into three sections according to the arrangement mentioned; and, on considering them singly, we are mistaken if he will not find in each, with many comprehensive statements and far-reaching exhibitions of truth, a line of thought connecting the whole with one member of the Godhead in His relation to the others, and in His work for our redemption. It is further interesting to observe how each section rises at its close to exhibit the work of the one to whose honour it is devoted, in strains of elevated grandeur, such as are rarely

equalled, and perhaps not surpassed, even in the pages of inspiration. Thus the first section concludes, in ch. iii. 21-31, by exhibiting the Father, in His grace, in providing the propitiation and bestowing His salvation upon Jew and Gentile, in a passage which has always formed one of the most solid foundations for the Church's hope, and one of her most precious sources of consolation, and will continue to be such till the end of time. Probably nowhere else have we such a comprehensive exhibition of the Son's work for man as at the close of the second section in ch. v.; while the third section culminates in ch. viii. by describing the work of the Spirit on the heart till its consummation in glory, in a passage which, in grandeur of thought, power of argument, and loftiness of expression, is perhaps not surpassed even in the writings of this apostle. Thus the doctrine of the Trinity—three divine persons severally performing their parts in the work of man's salvation, in distinctly defined order—is interwoven with the whole course of the apostle's argument in this epistle, justly pronounced by a modern writer 'the most profound work in existence.'

But besides this, the Three are brought together in single passages in several places; and it may be observed that these are what may be regarded as turning points in the course of his reasoning. Thus,

at the beginning of the fifth chapter, when he passes to the consideration of our becoming possessors of the blessings of Christ's purchase, he bases our restored relations to God on the work of the Son, and connects the actual enjoyment of present and the hope of future blessings with the working of the Spirit (vers. 1-5): 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST: . . . . and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.'

Again, in the third section, at the conclusion of his argument, to show that our deliverance from the penalty of sin in our justification is necessary in order to our deliverance from the bondage of corruption, and that our enjoyment of the first necessarily secures the latter, when he passes on to describe our condition in consequence, as partakers of the Spirit and under His influence, he again brings the Three together, exhibiting their mutual relations in our salvation (ch. viii. 2-4): 'The law of the SPIRIT of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own SON in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled

in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' The law or method of the Spirit of life, that is, of the Spirit, the author of life, delivers us from corruption, and secures our sanctification. This is effected through the satisfaction which the Son has rendered to the law, having 'for sin,' or by a sin-offering, 'condemned sin in the flesh, which it was impossible for the law to do;' but all this originated in the will of the Father, who sent His Son to secure these ends. Thus, at the close of the apostle's argument, to show that the gospel is the power of God unto sanctification, he brings together the three divine persons, as meeting in the accomplishment of the work.

Thus justified and sanctified, their ultimate safety is secured (ver. 1): 'There is no condemnation to them; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made them free from the law of sin and death.' And the remainder of the chapter is devoted to the proofs that their salvation will be completed. In the verses immediately following those just considered (vers. 5-11), he shows the certainty of this from the indwelling of the Spirit. The carnal mind is death; but the opposite, the spiritual mind, is life, and the possession of it necessarily involves the completion of their sanctification, and that in a body suited to the completely renewed

soul. But in describing this consummation of the work, he again brings the Three together (ver. 11) : ' If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you ; ' or, on account of His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

The expression, ' He that raised up Jesus from the dead, ' is a periphrasis for God. The reason for using such a form of expression is, that the force of his arguments, at least in some measure, depends on the fact stated. In this case the raising of Christ from the dead is the ground and pledge of the resurrection of believers. But this is further assured by the working of the Spirit. Because our souls are sanctified by the Spirit, they shall live in happiness and glory ; and because our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, they shall also be raised. Thus the completion of the work of salvation in the believer, by the resurrection of the body, is ascribed to the three persons of the Trinity. It is from the Father, as its origin ; meritoriously secured by the Son ; but further pledged by the working of the Spirit in them, as the completed result of His work, and, if the present reading be retained, actually effected by His agency.

In the next paragraph the apostle further argues



the certainty of believers' ultimate salvation from their adoption, as evidenced by the working of the Spirit in rendering them holy (ver. 13): 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' And why? Because this working of the Spirit proved their sonship (vers. 14, 15): 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' But if they are sons, their title to the inheritance is secure (vers. 16, 17): 'The SPIRIT itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.' Such is the course of argument. But it is important to observe that it is here taught that this security is enjoyed in fellowship with each of the three persons in the Godhead. It is to the Father that we are sons, and from whom we receive the privileges of that relation; it is by the Spirit that we are formed to the character of sons, and have the evidence in us of sonship; and it is in union with the Son, as 'joint-heirs with Him,' that our inheritance is obtained, our ultimate glory being of the same

kind with His, and our title to it secured, as was His, by His mediatorial sufferings, in consequence of which He was constituted 'the heir of all things' (Heb. i. 2).

It is proper to observe regarding the magnificent doxology in ch. xi. 33-36, with which the apostle concludes his doctrinal discussion, that the last sentence is by many excellent interpreters regarded as referring to the three persons of the Godhead distinctively: 'Of Him,' that is, by the agency of the Holy Ghost,—'through Him,' by the mediation of the Son;—'and to Him,' for the glory of the Father, 'are all things.' We cannot say, however, that this view approves itself to our mind. The words seem to us to refer rather to the undivided Godhead as the great source, the efficient agent, and the last end of all things.

In the practical part of the epistle we notice some passages in which the apostle brings together the three persons of the Godhead, in a manner which shows how the doctrine permeated his spiritual experience, and coloured the expression of it. In the fourteenth chapter the apostle urges the duty of forbearance regarding such matters as the distinction of meats and the observance of days, prescribed by the Mosaic law; and in the 17th and 18th verses he argues for it on the ground

that these things were not among the essentials of religion, and that Christianity does not consist in anything external: 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST; for he that in these things serveth CHRIST is acceptable to GOD, and approved of men.' The righteousness here mentioned seems to refer to our justification; and the verse seems based on ch. v. 1-5, where the blessings enjoyed by the believer, and their connection with the Spirit, are more fully described. But the point which we are called on to notice is, that the apostle describes our condition of privilege by its relation to the three persons in the Trinity. It is, as Alford remarks, 'in connection with, and under the indwelling and influence of,' the Holy Spirit, our life is a service to Christ, who is thus represented as Lord of the conscience, and receives the approval of God, to whom all must give account, and therefore should commend itself to our fellow-men.

In the next chapter is a passage (vers. 5-13) in which a reference to the Trinity is not at first sight apparent, but which, when carefully examined as a whole, will, we think, be found to imply the working of a Triune God. At verses 5-6 the apostle prays for the union and harmony of those whom

he addressed, as follows: 'The God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even THE FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ.' In these verses the Father is spoken of as the source of the good sought, and their union is sought as the means of advancing His glory. The Son is also referred to as the medium through whom we receive blessings and offer our services. But in the following verses he pleads for this unity in their practice, specially on the ground of His work in receiving both Jews and Gentiles into fellowship with Himself (ver. 7): 'Wherefore receive ye one another, as CHRIST hath received us, to the glory of God.' In illustration of this, he shows that Christ had been the agent of the Father in bringing both to Himself, by fulfilling the promises made to Israel, and thus opening the way for the exercise of His mercy to the Gentiles (vers. 8, 9). Having confirmed this by several quotations from the prophecies (vers. 9-12), he prays that the blessings desired may be fully realized to them by the working of the Holy Spirit (ver. 13): 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the HOLY GHOST.' Thus the union and harmony of the Church is here

sought, first, as the great means of glorifying the Father; secondly, as a duty to the Son from gratitude for His redeeming love to all classes alike; and thirdly, as the work of the Holy Spirit, who alone produces peace with God, peace in the conscience, and concord among men, and thus fills their hearts with joy and hope.

Again, at the 16th verse of the same chapter it is said, 'That I should be the minister of JESUS CHRIST to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of GOD, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the HOLY GHOST.' In preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, he was the ministrant of Christ, presenting as a priest, not holocausts of animals, but nations—not as a propitiation for sin, but as a living sacrifice—not prepared for the altar, as the Old Testament sacrifices were by water, but rendered holy by the energy of the third person of the Trinity on their hearts. If we understand the passage as referring to Christ in His priestly office, it will present Him as the medium of access to the Father; it will present the Father as representing the Godhead, to whom the Gentiles were an offering, and the Holy Ghost as the agent by whom they were purified, and rendered meet to be presented before the heart-searching God. If the allusion be to Christ in His kingly office, referring to

His superhuman power, and describing Paul as His deputy or agent, the meaning of the verse will be slightly different, but the reference to the divine Three will be no less distinct. The original language of the verse<sup>1</sup> inclines us to the first view.

The following verses, however, in which the apostle speaks of the successful manner in which he had fulfilled his ministry, and in which he attributes all his success to the power of Christ, certainly refer to Him in His exaltation to the throne of mediatorial power. And it will be observed how again in this passage he describes his work by a reference to the three persons in the Trinity (ver. 17): 'I have therefore whereof I may glory through JESUS CHRIST in those things which pertain to GOD.' His ministry had reference to God the Father, having for its object the restoration of the real worship and service of God in the hearts of men. But all was 'through Jesus Christ,' by the exercise of His power, so that in Him alone he had confidence and ground of boasting as to the accomplishment of his work (ver. 18): 'For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me.' He was only an instrument; the real power was in the Redeemer. But His working was by the agency of the Holy Spirit

<sup>1</sup> λειτουργὸν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, ἰεραουργοῦντα, etc.

(vers. 18, 19): 'To make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the SPIRIT of God.' It was in this way that Christ rendered the apostle's labours successful, partly through the instrumentality of miracles, but chiefly by the production of a new spiritual life in them, both, however, by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The exercise of such power by Christ, both in the external world and the hearts of men, clearly proves Him divine; and the whole passage represents the three persons of the Trinity in their respective offices, in bringing men to the enjoyment of salvation. Taking these verses with those immediately preceding, which we have just considered, the passage exhibits God the Father, in reference to whose glory the apostle laboured, and to whom converted souls were presented as an offering; God the Son, through whom, as King and Head of universal power, his labours were successful, and the Priest, in virtue of whose merits they were acceptable in the sight of the Most High; and God the Holy Ghost, the great agent in producing a change of heart, and thus rendering even polluted Gentiles a sacrifice well-pleasing unto God.

Again, at ver. 30 of the same chapter, the apostle says: 'Now I beseech you, brethren, for the LORD Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of

the SPIRIT, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to GOD for me.' Here the three persons are as distinctly recognised as in the apostolic benediction, in both passages the name of God being used to designate the Father, while the divinity of the Son and Spirit is implied in their sacred association with God, and in the use of an expression having the solemnity of an adjuration.



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## CHAPTER III.

### THE LATER EPISTLES OF PAUL.

#### THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

**I**N now proceeding to consider the writings of the apostle during his first imprisonment, we may remark that the Epistle to the Philippians contains no systematic exhibition of doctrine, and no orderly exposition of duty. It bears the character of a familiar and friendly letter to a church with which the apostle's relations had always been of a gratifying nature; whose freedom from doctrinal error and from practical irregularity called for no censure; and whose faithfulness to the Saviour, and whose kindness to himself, drew forth his warmest commendations. Hence, while the epistle, both as to matter and style, is deeply interesting and instructive, it presents little that bears upon our present object. The only passage we notice which may be considered as presenting the divine Three in their respective relations to our salvation, is ch. iii. 3 :

'We are the circumcision, who worship God in' (or by) 'the SPIRIT, and rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the flesh.' This verse, if the reading of the received text be maintained, presents us with God the Father as the object of worship, the Spirit as the agent under whose influence we offer our services, and the Son in whom, and not in anything outward, we have confidence in our approaches. The reading, however, is disputed; some critics rejecting the word 'God' altogether; others reading it, 'of God,' in the genitive, connected with the Spirit, and rendering the passage, 'In the Spirit of God serve,' etc.<sup>1</sup> But as the word translated serve, in the New Testament at least, always denotes religious service, the meaning is substantially the same, whatever reading we adopt.

#### THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

The Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians are intimately connected. To a large extent they discuss the same great truths, and often show a remarkable correspondence in words and expressions. They differ, however, in method, and in some respects in their object. That to the Colossians is polemic, and deals with certain Oriental forms of

theosophy, which degraded the Son of God to the rank of an archangel, or other superhuman creature. That to the Ephesians is devotional and expository, and, without reference to particular heretical opinions, it treats in the loftiest strains of the grandest themes of the Christian faith.

The Epistle to the Colossians being specially directed against serious errors regarding the person of the Son, brings Him prominently before us in the divinity of His person. In this way it contributes largely to support the doctrine of the Trinity; but, for the same reason, it does not so fully exhibit the other persons in the Godhead. Still we do find all three brought together and recognised in their essential and economical relations. Thus, in the first chapter (vers. 3-8), we find them combined in the thanksgiving with which the apostle introduces his epistle; and it is worthy of note that here the three graces—faith, hope, and love—are, as in other passages, associated with the three persons in the Godhead. 'We give thanks to GOD and' (or even) 'THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, praying always, since we heard of your *faith* in CHRIST JESUS, and of the *love* which ye have to all the saints, for the *hope* which is laid up for you, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel. . . . As ye also learned of Epaphras, who also declared

your love in the SPIRIT.' Here, while the apostle prays to the Father, and in thanksgiving acknowledges Him as the great source of spiritual blessings, he recognises these as enjoyed through faith in His Son, as He is exhibited in the gospel; and then describes their new character as produced by, or rather in, the Spirit,—the words expressing a new state under His influence, in contrast with the unspiritual condition of those (*ἐν σαρκί*) in the flesh.

Immediately following this recognition of their state, as under the power of the Spirit, he bursts forth into fervent prayer for their confirmation and progress in the Christian life (vers. 9–11): 'For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,' etc. All the best interpreters agree that the word translated 'spiritual'<sup>1</sup> in the New Testament, generally bears the sense of being produced by the Spirit. Indeed Alford goes the length of saying, that 'in the New Testament it *always* implies the working of the Holy Spirit, *never* bearing the modern inaccurate sense of spiritual as opposed to bodily;' while Eadie and Ellicott merely speak of this as 'the prevailing usage.' Undoubtedly here it expresses the

<sup>1</sup> πνευματικῆ.

agency of the Holy Ghost, so that in this passage He is represented as the author of the present and prospective Christian attainments of those addressed. The purpose and design of His working is expressed in the following verses: 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord' (viz. Christ) 'unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God' (the mention of Father and Son here successively is worthy of note); 'strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power' (in Eph. iii. 16 the equivalent expression is, 'strengthened with might *by the Spirit*'), 'unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.' We have already seen that the terms power, and power of God, are used to express the work of the Spirit, and undoubtedly His agency is referred to here.

But this leads to the acknowledging of the Father as the great original source of these blessings (vers. 12, 13): 'Giving thanks unto the FATHER' (the words express the exercise of the Colossians), 'which hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear SON.'

And then he passes on to what is here his special theme—the person and work of the Son (vers. 14–22): 'In whom we have redemption through

His blood, the forgiveness of sins : who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature : for by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by Him, and for Him ; and He is before all things, and, by Him all things consist. . . . For it pleased the Father, that in Him should all fulness dwell : and, having made peace through the blood of the cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself ; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in His sight.'

This passage contains one of the most exhaustive assertions of our Lord's divinity to be found in all Paul's writings. Indeed, in this respect, only two or three passages in the New Testament can compare with it. But we only notice it in the connection in which it stands in its bearing upon our subject. The last clause brought in as the end and result—'To present you holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in His sight'—expresses, as we know from other passages, properly the work of the Spirit,

which is the consequence of our reconciliation to God through the death of the Son. But, independent of this, looking at the whole connection, it will be seen that the apostle here recognises the three divine persons in their distinctive yet concurrent working in the salvation of men; that while the person and work of the Son are specially prominent,—while, indeed, His divinity and redemption are the main theme of the paragraph,—yet, looking to the immediately preceding context (vers. 9-11), they are exhibited in connection with the other two—the Spirit as the agent working in, and the Father as the great source of, all spiritual good.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

The Epistle to the Ephesians exhibits, perhaps, more remarkably than any of the apostle's other writings, this doctrine as underlying its whole structure. We can do little more than notice the principal passages in which this is the case, and we are mistaken if they will not be found more numerous than has been generally observed.

After the usual salutation at the commencement, he breaks out into an animated expression of praise to God for the blessings of salvation enjoyed by

himself and his fellow-Christians (ch. i. 3-14). This whole passage forms one long sentence, and, keeping in view what has been already said regarding the length to which the apostle sometimes draws out his sentences, we have only to separate it into its component parts, to see that the whole of its pregnant utterances cluster round the adorable Three. The third verse is general: 'Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all SPIRITUAL blessings in heavenly places in CHRIST.' Keeping in view the remarks recently made regarding the word translated 'spiritual' in the New Testament, as implying the working of the Spirit of God, 'spiritual blessings,' here mentioned, will mean blessings of the Spirit, or blessings produced by Him. And then we have the Three included in the apostle's ascriptions of praise,—God the Father bestowing the Spirit, God the Son as the medium through which He is bestowed, and God the Spirit as the actual author of these blessings.

But in the following verses, as Alford beautifully remarks, 'the threefold cord, so to speak, is unwrapped, and the part of each divine person separately described.' First, the Father is represented as having chosen us to holiness, predestinated us to sonship, and accepted or bestowed grace upon us (vers. 4, 5): 'According as He hath chosen



us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.' It is added, as the final end or purpose of the whole, '*to the praise of the glory of His grace*, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved' (ver. 6).

In thus describing the work of the Father, he notices that it is effected through the Son (vers. 5, 6); but he now proceeds, in the second place, more particularly to describe the work of the latter. Accordingly, in vers. 7-11, he represents Him as redeeming us by His blood, revealing God's will, gathering all God's holy creatures under one head, and providing for His redeemed an inheritance of glory: 'In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. . . . Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself: that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one all things in CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance,' etc. And then, as before, the ultimate result and final end is described (ver. 12): 'That we should

be to the *praise of His glory*, who first trusted in Christ.'

And, thirdly, comes the crown of this grace, in the working of the Spirit, through the word, upon our hearts, purifying our souls, and thus assuring us of the fulfilment of our hopes (vers. 13, 14): 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise' (literally the Spirit of promise, the Holy One), 'which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.' But as in its origin and progress, so in this the final issue of the glorious scheme,—as in all present blessings, so in all future good, even to this its final consummation,—the last and highest end is described as before, 'UNTO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY.'

We have only thus to analyze the passage, and arrange its parts in order, to observe that in this, perhaps the most sublime of the apostle's thanksgivings (*tehillim*, or praise songs, as David would call them), he not only devoutly recognises God as the great primal source of our salvation, but finds in the specific work of each of the three persons of the Trinity matter of special acknowledgment and heartfelt thanksgiving, showing how the operation

of the members of the Godhead respectively in our salvation enters into the devotion of God's children, laying its foundation, and forming its very marrow. It is beautiful and important to observe, further, how the apostle, at the close of his account of the work of each, brings in, as the refrain of some celestial melody, 'to the praise of His glory,' expressive of the grand end and glorious issue of the whole; that the gracious working of the blessed Three, in their separate functions in the work of our salvation, might exhibit the glory of the undivided Godhead, and thus afford, through eternity to all God's intelligent creatures, matter of highest wonder and most exalted praise.

After praise, as Eadie remarks, comes prayer. Immediately following the apostle's thanksgiving for the blessings enjoyed by all believers, he gives his prayer for the Ephesians, that they might enjoy the Spirit in increasing measure and advancing forms of manifestation (vers. 15-17): 'Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the FATHER of glory, may give unto you the SPIRIT of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.' In this prayer the three divine persons are again recognised. We

have, first, God the Father, as the object to whom it is addressed. Secondly, we have described His relation to the Son, not only personally, but officially, sending Him as the Saviour, revealing Himself in Him, and bestowing His blessings through Him: 'The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.' And then, thirdly, we have the matter of prayer expressed generally: 'That He would give unto you the SPIRIT of wisdom and revelation.' We take the word 'Spirit' here, with all the most evangelical interpreters, to denote the Holy Spirit. They had already enjoyed Him as an earnest and seal. But much yet remained to be known of God and of the Saviour, and much to be felt of the Spirit's gracious power; and the apostle therefore prays that He might be given to them in other forms and in fuller measure, making known to them the things of God—revealing their excellence and glory—that thus they might appreciate the blessedness and grandeur of their hopes, and the wondrous display of omnipotence in their regeneration, of which we have a glorious prototype in the resurrection and exaltation of the Son, the head and representative of His Church (vers. 18-23).

Having thus looked at the subject, if we may so speak, from the Godward side, the apostle proceeds, in the second chapter, to consider it from the

human. Having described the blessings of salvation as originating with the all-glorious Three in eternity, he next proceeds to trace the same blessings as they are enjoyed by men, both Jews and Gentiles, in time. Accordingly, in this chapter, he describes the former condition of both classes as dead in trespasses and sins, and the present state of Christians of both classes as now made alive, and united to form one glorious spiritual temple. But in tracing this change, he, in the same exact order, brings out the operation of the three persons in the Godhead successively. First, all is traced to the love of the Father, as its original source (vers. 4-10): 'God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, . . . hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. . . . For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.'

In this paragraph he had referred incidentally to the Son, as the medium through whom the Father

bestows His blessings; but he now proceeds, in the second place, to show more fully and particularly, how the change in the condition of those addressed was effected, viz. by the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, described as 'His blood,' 'His flesh,' 'His cross,' by which the ceremonial law of Moses had been abolished, and the middle wall of partition broken down (vers. 13-17): 'Now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace . . .; having abolished in His flesh the enmity . . .; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross,' etc.

And then, in the concluding part of the chapter, from ver. 18 to the end, he shows, in the third place, that while the change is to be traced to God the Father in its origin, and to God the Son as the medium through whose vicarious sacrifice it has been secured, yet it is effected by the actual working of the Spirit,

This passage, however, calls for more particular consideration, as it not only brings out prominently the agency of the Holy Spirit, but describes the new relation of the regenerate both to God and to one another, and in each case by a reference to each of the three persons of the Trinity. As to God, the

apostle says (ver. 18): 'Through Him' (*i.e.* CHRIST) 'we both have access by one SPIRIT unto the FATHER.' Here the triune relation is again brought out. We have, or properly we are having, free approach or introduction before God, whom we worship as the Father without servile terror, through the Son, who, as stated in the verses immediately preceding, has reconciled us to God by His vicarious sufferings, and by the Spirit, who fills our hearts, and lifts them up to God.

Then, in relation to one another, he describes Gentiles as with the Jews, by the Spirit dwelling in them, formed into one spiritual temple (vers. 19-22): 'Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of GOD' (plainly the Father); 'and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST being the chief corner stone' (this temple, though still imperfect, is rising to completion); 'in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth' (describing a process still going on) 'unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded' (or are being builded) 'together for an habitation of God through the SPIRIT.' As Alford excellently gives the sense of this passage, 'It is even now, in the state of imperfection, by the Spirit dwelling in the hearts of believers, that God has

His habitation in the Church; and then, when the growth and increase of that Church shall be completed, it will be still in and by the Holy Spirit, fully penetrating and possessing the whole glorified Church, that the Father will dwell in it for ever. Thus we have the true temple of the Father, built in the Son, inhabited in the Spirit, the offices of the three blessed persons being distinctly pointed out: God the FATHER, in all His fulness, dwells in, fills the Church; that Church is constituted an Holy Temple to Him, in the SON; is inhabited by Him in the ever-present indwelling of the HOLY SPIRIT.'

In accordance with this view of the relation of believers to one another, and unitedly to the three persons in the Godhead, the apostle, at the 6th verse of the following chapter, describes the Gentiles as 'fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and fellow-partakers of the promise.'<sup>1</sup> In this description of our privileges, the allusion to the three persons of the Trinity is unmistakeable. We are fellow-heirs of the FATHER, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named (vers. 14, 15); of the same body with the SON (ch. ii. 14, 15; 1 Cor. xii. 12); and fellow-partakers of the gifts of the SPIRIT, the great promise of the New Testament (Joel ii. 28; Acts i. 4; Gal. iii. 2-14).

<sup>1</sup> συγκαληρονόμα, καὶ σύσσωμα, καὶ συμμέτοχα τῆς ἰσχυρίας.



This bringing in of the Gentiles to the possession of the same privileges with the Jews, was a mystery—something hitherto concealed; but it was now to be publicly proclaimed, and the apostle was selected by God as an instrument for that purpose. And it is worthy of notice, that in describing his office, as receiving the revelation of this truth to communicate it to others, he refers to the three persons of the Godhead, as if, while writing this epistle, his mind was so occupied with the glories of the Trinity, that whatever subject he touched, he must look at it in its relation to each of the blessed three (ch. iii. 2-6): 'The dispensation of the grace of GOD which is given to me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few words; whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of CHRIST, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the SPIRIT.' His apostleship was a stewardship, graciously committed to him by God, to make known the truth of the union of Jews and Gentiles, in the enjoyment of equal privileges,—a mystery or secret of Christ; either of Him as the subject, or Himself the great mystery (Col. i. 27),—and revealed by the Spirit.

The chapter, and the doctrinal part of the epistle,

conclude with a prayer and a doxology, each of which is based upon the doctrine we are now considering (vers. 14-21): 'For this cause I bow my knees unto the FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ' (a title expressive of the Father's covenant relation to believers), 'of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named' (in whom the true relation of Father exists essentially, so that as He is the true Father of the eternal Son, He is also the true Father of all who are called children—ch. iv. 5, 6), 'that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His SPIRIT' (the great agent in all spiritual changes) 'in the inner man; that' (or, so that, expressive of results) 'CHRIST may dwell in your hearts by faith' (as the source of our strength, and in whom we have our spiritual life); 'that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.' The sentence is incomplete. The apostle seems to have had in view the great mystery of salvation in general; but, as he contemplates it, his mind becomes filled with the idea of the love of Christ, to which it is owing that he does not finish the sentence he had begun, but exclaims, 'And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might *be filled with all the* FULNESS OF GOD;' or, as

it is in the original, '*unto* all the fulness of God,' marking the standard or ultimate point to be reached.

This is perhaps the sublimest of the apostle's recorded prayers; but its grandeur arises, in good part at least, from the recognition of Trinity in unity. The working of each of the blessed three is sought; and in thus partaking of each in his special manifestation to the children of God, we reach to the enjoyment of the plenitude of the divine perfections, and realize in our experience the whole communicable fulness of the Godhead.

'Paul's prayer,' says Dr. Hodge, 'had apparently reached a height, beyond which neither faith nor hope nor even imagination could go, and yet he is not satisfied. An immensity still lay beyond. God was able to do not only what he had asked, but infinitely more than he knew either to ask or think. Having exhausted all the forms of prayer, he cast himself on the infinitude of God, in full confidence that He can and will do all that omnipotence itself can effect. This idea he weaves into a doxology, which has in it more of heaven than of earth.'

But this, again, is based upon the working of the three divine persons in our salvation, though the third is not expressly named (vers. 20, 21): 'Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think' (plainly the Father),

'according to the power that worketh in us' (viz. the Spirit, as he had just said in ver. 16), 'unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus' (that is, in union and fellowship with Him), 'throughout all ages, world without end. Amen;'—an accumulation of expressions in accordance with the unutterable aspirations to which his mind had now risen. 'The Trinity,' says Eadie, 'is here again brought out to view. The power within us is that of the Spirit, and glory in Christ is presented to the Father, who answers prayer through the Son and by the Spirit; and therefore to the Father, in the Son and by the Spirit, is offered this glorious minstrelsy, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.'

'To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
The God whom heaven's triumphant host,  
And saints on earth adore,  
Be glory as in ages past,  
As now it is, and so shall last,  
When time shall be no more.'

Such is a review of the doctrinal part of this epistle; and it must be evident to every candid inquirer, that the doctrine of the Trinity is interwoven with its whole structure. The fourth chapter commences the practical part; and though in this we would scarcely expect to meet with the doctrine of the Trinity, yet, on close examination, we will, if

we mistake not, find the allusions to the Trinity as distinct as in the doctrinal and devotional portions.

Following up the idea of the unity of believers, the apostle, in the beginning of the chapter, exhorts those whom he addressed to corresponding conduct—to maintain and to cultivate unity by the manifestation of those Christian virtues which are productive of peace: 'Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' And then he states its nature and grounds in the following terms (vers. 4-6): 'There is one body, and one SPIRIT, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one LORD, one faith, one baptism, one GOD AND FATHER of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.' Here are seven points in which the unity of the Church consists; but it will be found, on close examination, that they cluster round the three adorable names; and that, commencing with the work of the Spirit upon believers, the apostle rises upward to describe their relation to the Son, and finally to the Father as supreme. There is ONE SPIRIT which animates the one body (1 Cor. xii. 13), by whom we are called, and through whom we thus become partakers of the hope of the inheritance; ONE LORD, the one divine object, on whom our faith rests, and to the profession of whose name we were baptized (Gal. iii. 27); and one GOD and FATHER of all.

Dr. Hodge on this passage well remarks: 'There are many passages to which the doctrine of the Trinity gives a sacred rhythm, though the doctrine itself is not directly asserted. It is so here. There is one Spirit, one Lord, one God, one Father. The unity of the Church is founded on this doctrine. It is one, because there is to us one God the Father, one Lord, one Spirit. It is a truly mystical union, not a mere union of opinion, of interest, or of feeling, but something supernatural arising from a common principle of life. This life is not the national life, which belongs to us as creatures, nor intellectual which belongs to us as rational beings, but it is spiritual, called elsewhere the life of God in the soul. And as this life is common, on the one hand, to Christ and all His members, and, on the other, to Christ and God, this union of the Church is not only with Christ, but with the Triune God.'

Alford, Ellicott, Olshausen, and other modern interpreters, following some of the fathers, regard the last clause of ver. 6 as referring to the three persons of the Trinity successively. They regard the words 'over all' as describing the Father in His sovereignty; 'through all,' as Alford expresses it, 'in the co-extensiveness of redemption by Him, with the whole nature of man,' as in ver. 10; and 'in all,' referring to the Spirit, as indwelling in all

believers (ch. ii. 21). But, as Eadie well remarks, while 'in various parts of the epistle triune relation has been distinctly brought out, here the representation is different; for unity is the idea dwelt on, and it is the one God and Father Himself, who works through all, and dwells in all.' These two views we do not deem irreconcilable, but rather think that both must be combined in order to get the full meaning of the apostle. God the Father is supreme, and the primal source of all divine working, so that, while He is over all, that is, all believers, He is through them all, but by the working of the Son, 'by whom all things consist,' and in all, viz. by the indwelling of the Spirit (see ch. ii. 21, 22).

As the apostle goes on to press upon those whom he addressed, the avoidance of those vices to which they had been addicted in their heathen state, and the cultivation of the opposite Christian virtues, it is interesting to observe how he draws his motives from the part assigned to each of the blessed three in our salvation (ver. 30): 'And grieve not the HOLY SPIRIT of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' These words primarily refer to the warnings of the previous verses, and present a strong appeal against the practices there condemned. But as, according to the apostle's mode of writing, the conclusion of one paragraph forms

the starting-point of the next, the appeal here against grieving the Spirit is by most interpreters referred forward to the exhortation of the following verse. Grief arises from a loving heart being wounded, and the ascription of this feeling to the Spirit strongly expresses the love manifested in His operations upon our hearts; but this naturally leads the apostle to warn his readers against all malevolent feelings and dispositions, as opposed to the loving Spirit of holiness (ver. 31): 'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.' But he goes on to urge upon them the opposite virtues, and he does so on the consideration of the grace of God the Father, in freely forgiving all our sins through Christ (ch. iv. 32; v. 1): 'And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as GOD for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God' (or imitators of God, viz. by forgiving one another), 'as dear children.' And then, to the same effect, he urges them to a life of love, by the example of the love of the Son, who 'gave His life a ransom for many' (ver. 2): 'And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.'

Here, then, the exhortation to avoid all malevolent



dispositions and to cultivate the opposite virtues, both in heart and life, is urged upon us by a reference to each of the three persons in the Godhead, but a reference founded on the love of each, manifested in His special part in the work of our salvation. The 'good Spirit' will be grieved by everything opposed to His own benevolent nature; the Father has shown the riches of His grace in forgiving our trespasses; and the Son has manifested love greater than that of any man, in that He laid down His life for the salvation, not of His friends, but of His foes.<sup>1</sup>

In the verses immediately following, he solemnly warns his readers against two vices, especially characteristic of heathenism, uncleanness in its various forms, and covetousness; and if the reading of the received text be correct, he draws his motive from the three persons in the Godhead successively (vers. 6-8): 'Let no man deceive you with vain words' (finding plausible pretexts for these vices): 'for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the LORD: walk as children of the light.' And having thus spoken of the Father

<sup>1</sup> This is one of those passages in which an unfortunate division of chapters tends to obscure the meaning.

and the Son, the apostle adds parenthetically, as if he would not omit at the same time some reference to the third person of the Godhead (ver. 9): 'For the fruit of the SPIRIT is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth;' and concludes the paragraph by adding, 'proving what is acceptable to the Lord.'

If the reading of the received text be approved, this passage will present an appeal against the vices just mentioned, on three grounds: first, that it is for such sins that the wrath of God the Father is poured out upon the ungodly; secondly, that they are inconsistent with the believer's relation to the Son as in fellowship with Him, and should be avoided from a desire to meet His approval; and, thirdly, that they are contrary to the very nature of the work of the Spirit. In this view, we would have the three persons of the Godhead again recognised. It is proper to observe, however, that the majority of editors substitute *φωτός* (light) for *τοῦ πνεύματος* (the Spirit), and read, 'the fruit of light,' on the authority of the Vulgate, and what are considered the best MSS. We do not consider the grounds sufficient, as the Syriac, the majority of MSS., and two of the best Greek commentators, Chrysostom and Theodoret, adopt the reading of the text; but as the majority of critics take a different view, we do not press this passage.

Again, at vers. 18-20 of the same chapter, in

exhibiting the great duty of praising God for His mercies, the apostle says: 'Be filled with the SPIRIT; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord' (in the parallel passage in Colossians it is 'to God'); 'giving thanks always unto God and the FATHER' (or even the Father) 'in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.' The duty is here said to be performed under the influence of the Spirit, to God as the great object, and through the mediation of the Son, through whom we have the right to come, and through whom we are accepted.

We have already noticed that we sometimes find the three persons of the Godhead mentioned in succession in passages which may not be considered as exhibiting them in relation to one another, either personally, or in the work of man's salvation, but which are worthy of notice as having some bearing on the subject. A passage of this kind will be found in the sixth chapter. In exhorting his readers in reference to the Christian conflict he says (vers. 10, 11): 'Be strong in the LORD, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.' And then, after describing their enemies, and enumerating the various parts of the Christian armour, he adds (ver. 18): 'Praying always with

all prayer and supplication in the SPIRIT.' Thus, in order to their maintaining successfully the Christian conflict, the apostle directs them to the assistance of each of the three persons of the Trinity in succession.

Even if the last passage be omitted, said we not rightly that this epistle is remarkable for the manner in which this doctrine is interwoven with its whole structure ?

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## CHAPTER IV.

### LATEST EPISTLES OF PAUL.

#### THE PASTORAL EPISTLES.

**T**HE pastoral epistles are generally occupied with the consideration of matters connected with the order and discipline of the Church, and it is only incidentally that they treat of Christian doctrine. But one passage in the Epistle to Titus is worthy of special attention, as bearing on our present subject. At ch. iii. 4-6 we have a comprehensive exhibition of the whole plan of salvation, and that in relation to the three persons in the Godhead: 'After that the kindness and love of GOD our Saviour toward man (*φιλανθρωπία*) appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the HOLY GHOST; which He shed on us abundantly through JESUS CHRIST our Saviour.' Here we have the same view as in other passages of salvation, as originating in

the benignity and love towards men of the Father, who pours out His Spirit, the actual agent in renewing the heart, and whose influences have been secured through the merits of God's Son. 'All the spiritual blessings of the new birth and of the new life are therein represented as flowing down to us from and out of the one fountain and well-spring of the love of God the Father; and are all derived to us through God the Son, God and man, who is the sole channel of all grace to men; and are applied to us personally by the agency of God the Holy Ghost.'

## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

There only remains to be considered of the writings ascribed to Paul, the Epistle to the Hebrews. This, however, need not detain us long. The great object of the writer is to confirm the Jewish converts to Christianity in the faith of the gospel, by showing the superiority of the New Testament dispensation to the Old—the one being the shadow, and the other the substance. Through a large portion of the book, his argument on this point turns on the dignity of Christ's person, so that in no part of the word of God have we clearer or more sublime exhibitions of the divinity of our Saviour; and thus it

contributes largely to establish the doctrine of the Trinity. But the work of the Spirit does not prominently come into view. But still some passages in which the three are referred to in conjunction are worthy of notice. Thus in ch. ix. 14 it is said, 'How much more shall the blood of CHRIST, who through the eternal SPIRIT offered Himself without spot to GOD, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?'

There has been considerable difference of opinion regarding the meaning of the phrase 'eternal Spirit' in this verse. Many excellent interpreters understand it as denoting the third person of the Trinity. This view gives to the whole passage a sense which is in entire accordance with the teachings of the word of God on the subject. Undoubtedly it was by the agency of the Spirit upon Christ's humanity, both in actually forming it and in sanctifying it at its original conception, that He became the spotless victim; and it was by the same Spirit maintaining His holy character and inspiring that compassion for man, that zeal for God's glory, and that submission to His Father's will, which animated Him through all His course of doing and suffering, that His offering was not only without blemish, but so meritorious and so acceptable in the sight of God. If this view be correct, the passage will present the

three persons in the Trinity co-operating in Christ's sacrifice for the redemption of men. But many, and perhaps the majority of modern interpreters, understand the phrase 'eternal Spirit' as denoting Christ's divine nature; and as we do not wish to ground a conclusion on a passage the meaning of which is unsettled, though we think strong arguments may be adduced in favour of the first interpretation, we do not urge it further.

The practical exhortations interspersed through the apostle's doctrinal discussions, are pressed upon the attention of his readers in several passages by a reference to the three persons in the Trinity. Thus, having in the first chapter shown the superiority of Christ to angels, by whose agency the Sinaitic covenant was introduced, he, at the beginning of the second chapter, earnestly presses home upon his hearers the superior claims of the New Testament revelation, and the danger of neglecting it (vers. 3, 4): 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; GOD also bearing witness, both with signs, and wonders, and gifts of the HOLY GHOST, according to His own will?' It will be seen here that the ground on which the apostle rests our obligation to receive the gospel is, that it comes to

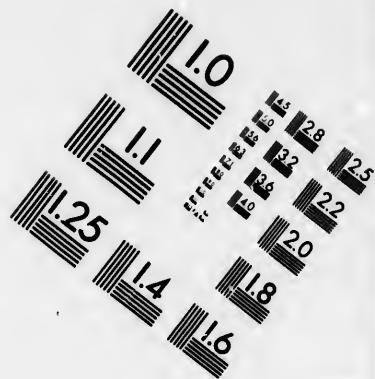
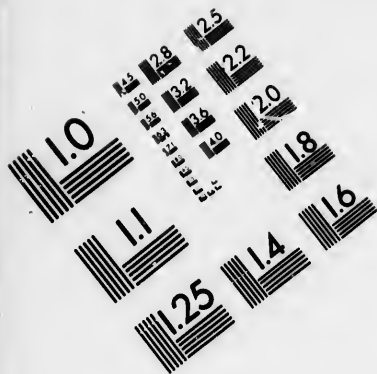


us with the authority of each of the three persons in the Godhead. What madness, then, to reject a revelation so confirmed!

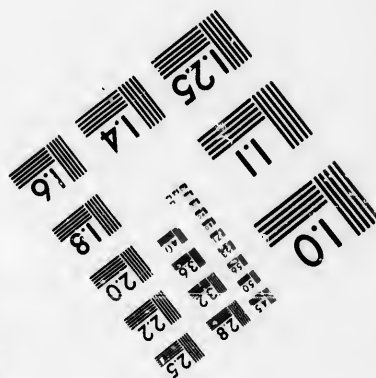
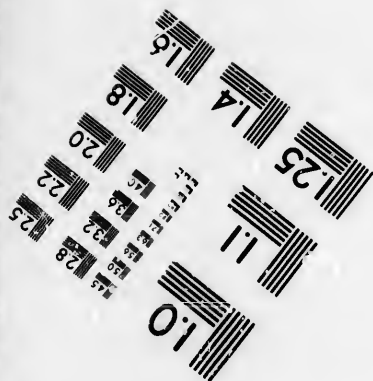
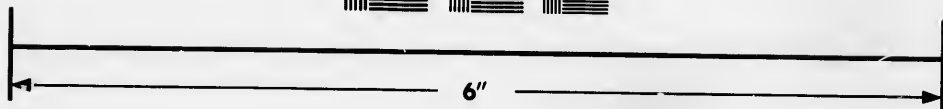
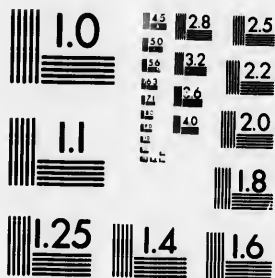
The warnings of this epistle are particularly directed against apostasy; and we may notice two passages in which his appeal is based on the work of the three persons of the Godhead. In ch. vi. 4-6 it is said: 'It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the HOLY GHOST, and have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the SON OF GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame.' This passage describes the aggravated guilt and fearful danger of the apostate, and this is represented by its being an affront to the three persons of the Godhead. He despises the influences of the Spirit, of which he has been partaker; he crucifies the Son afresh, and thus he dishonours the Father, whose Son he puts to shame, and whose good word in the gospel he tramples under foot. How awful his guilt! how tremendous his condemnation!

Again, in ch. x. 28, 29, he says: 'He that despised Moses' law died under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment shall he be





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thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the SON of GOD, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the SPIRIT of grace?' Here, again, to show the fearful doom of the apostate, he exhibits his crime in relation to the three persons in the Godhead. There are three witnesses against him,—the Father, who has given to him His Son; the Son, whose blood he tramples under foot; and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of grace, to whom, in His gracious drawing, he does despite.

We have thus reviewed the writings of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, which form so large and so important a portion of the New Testament revelation; and we venture to affirm that the examination, even as thus imperfectly conducted, has been sufficient to show that, if he does not present the doctrine to his readers in the shape of a dogmatic formula, it both formed the basis of his doctrinal system, and inspired his whole religious life.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES.

#### EPISTLES OF PETER.

**I**N now proceeding to consider the catholic epistles, it must be admitted that that of James, with its earnest practical exhortations, though assuming throughout the divinity of our Saviour, does not present any passage directly bearing upon our present purpose. But on turning to those of the other apostles, whose object was more dogmatic, we shall find that, in their discussion of the Christian salvation, the doctrine of the Trinity holds the same place as it does in those portions of the word of God already considered.

Thus, in regard to the writings of Peter, we have only to glance at the first chapter of his first epistle, to see that his teaching is as deeply imbued with this truth, as that of his beloved brother Paul. His opening salutation assumes a Trinity, and exhibits the concurrent action of the three persons in the

salvation of men, just as represented in the evangelical scheme (ver. 2): 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God THE FATHER, through sanctification of THE SPIRIT, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of JESUS CHRIST.' Here we have the Father electing, the Spirit sanctifying, and the Son's blood applied or sprinkled. The order is somewhat different from that observed in other passages. Here the apostle begins with the electing love of the Father, then refers to the work of the Spirit upon the soul, and finally describes the enjoyment of the efficacy of the atoning blood of the Son. This, though not the actual order as to time of the operation of the three persons of the Trinity, in the purchase and application of redemption, is the order of actual enjoyment of its blessings by the individual sinner: first, election; secondly, sanctification by the Spirit, including under that term all His gracious operations, from His first gentle knockings at the door of the heart; and *then*, thirdly, the application or sprinkling of the blood of Christ.

'The apostle,' says an old divine, 'to endear the heart of all saints he wrote to, unto these three persons, singly shuts up their distinct agencies in our great and common salvation, in as few words as possible to utter them in. Salvation was the subject he was to write them about; he in the front placeth

and sets up the coat of arms of these three Blessed Ones, as the joint founders of our salvation, emblazoning what each did contribute thereunto.<sup>1</sup>

Then follows a doxology, in which the apostle recognises the first and second persons of the Godhead by name, and the third by implication: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' From the manner in which, as we have already seen, the terms 'power' and 'power of God' are employed to denote the working of the Spirit, and from the fact that this keeping is His special work, we have reason to believe that His agency is referred to in the words in the 5th verse: 'Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' If this be the case, we shall have in this passage the operation of the whole three in our salvation, distinctly acknowledged.

The opening of the second epistle contains words so similar, that we shall notice them here (ch. i. 2, 3): 'Grace and peace be multiplied unto you

<sup>1</sup> Goodwin vii. 535, Nichol's Edition.



through the knowledge of GOD, and of JESUS OUR LORD, according as HIS DIVINE POWER hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.' The recognition of the first and second persons here is apparent; but that the personification of the divine power in the third verse denotes the working of the Holy Spirit, is scarcely less obvious.

While, however, we do not doubt in the least that the Holy Spirit is referred to in the two passages just quoted, and in others of the same kind, it must at once be admitted, that they have not the same argumentative value as those in which He is mentioned by name. The words themselves might denote simply the exercise of the divine attribute of power; and it is only by evidence drawn from other sources, that we learn to recognise in such expressions, the working of the third person in the Trinity. But the devout disciple, comparing scripture with scripture, will find in such passages additional confirmation of his faith in the doctrine of the Trinity, and rich nutriment for his devotion, not only as going forth to the absolute God, but as embracing the working of the adorable Three in our salvation.

Reverting to the first chapter of the first epistle, we have at the conclusion (vers. 17-23) an exhortation to holiness, based on the appropriate part which

each of the three persons in the Trinity bears in our salvation; and a very superficial examination of it will show, that the beauty and force of the apostle's argument rest upon this doctrine. In vers. 15, 16, he urges holiness upon them, by a consideration of the character of God absolutely, and their relation to Him: 'As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.' But as in former cases, the threefold cord is there unwrapped, and the apostle proceeds to make a particular appeal on the ground of the relation of each of the three persons of the Godhead to believers, and His special work for their benefit. To show this, it will be only necessary to separate the passage into its component parts, arranging them under their respective heads.

1. THE FATHER.—'And if ye call on the FATHER, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear' (ver. 17).

2. THE SON.—'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of CHRIST, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was fore-ordained before

the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, who raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God' (vers. 18-21).

3. THE SPIRIT.—'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the SPIRIT unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever' (vers. 22, 23).

To us it appears surprising that commentators have generally, if not universally, missed this simple view of the passage. We submit whether it does not afford a key which unlocks all the intricacies of the connection, and so present the arguments of the apostle in the clearest and most forcible light.

The other passages in the writings of this apostle, in which there are references to a Triune Godhead, are neither so distinct, nor so important, but they may be briefly noticed.

In the second chapter (vers. 4-6), we have a representation of the Church as a temple, very similar to that of his beloved brother Paul (2 Cor. iii. 16; Eph. ii. 21): 'To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen

of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone,' etc. Taking the word *πνευματικός* (spiritual) in its proper New Testament sense, already pointed out,—as denoting not merely a contrast with what is external, or material, but as expressing the operation of the Spirit of God,—we have here not only the same representation of the Church as a spiritual building, but we have the Blessed Three exhibited in the same relation to it as in the writings of the Apostle Paul: God the Father, as the great object of worship, whose is the temple, and to whom its religious services are offered; God the Son, who is both the foundation and the corner-stone, through whom our sacrifices are presented and accepted; and God the Spirit, who by His work on the heart makes each believer a living stone, through whose power we are enabled to render such sacrifices, and who thus dwells in the body as a spiritual temple.

In ch. iii. 18, according to the words of our translation, the Three are brought together in the work of Christ: 'CHRIST also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to GOD, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened

by the SPIRIT.' But the meaning of the last clause is so much disputed, that we do not dwell upon the passage.

In speaking of the sufferings of believers, the apostle, in ch. iv. 13, 14, connects them with the three persons of the Godhead: 'Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of CHRIST's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the SPIRIT of glory and of GOD resteth on you.' Such sufferings are here represented as in the name of Christ, that is, for the profession of Him as the Saviour; they were also of the same kind with His; those who endured them were under the influence of the Spirit, here called the Spirit of glory, but this proceeding from God, 'the Spirit of glory and of God,' that is, the Spirit of glory, which is also the Spirit of God.

In the first chapter of the second epistle there is a passage of deep interest, in which the apostle describes the grounds of his assurance of the second coming of Christ, which we may notice here from the manner in which the three persons in the Godhead are introduced (vers. 17-21): 'We have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.' And how did he know this? By

the exhibition of His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration: 'But were eye-witnesses of His majesty.' And the Father, at the same time, gave testimony to Him as His own Son: 'For He received from God the FATHER honour and glory, when there came such a voice from the most excellent glory, This is my beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased.' But in addition to this, we have the testimony of the Holy Ghost: 'We have a more sure word of prophecy. . . . For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST.' If the long-disputed passage in the first epistle of John (ch. v. 7) be not genuine, we have here at all events 'the three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.'

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

The first epistle of John is a delightful exhibition of the spirit of the beloved disciple, and of Him on whose bosom he leaned. But there has been much discussion regarding its design and general scope, and by some it has been regarded as without method, or any connected train of thought. The difficulty in discovering the plan of the epistle, we are per-

suaded, however, arises from disregarding the apostle's own account of his object, as stated at ch. i. 3, 4: 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that our joy may be full.' Leaving out of view other subjects that are introduced, rather incidentally, in the course of the apostle's reasoning, and what we regard as a sort of side-strokes, dealt out to opponents as he advances, we regard this fellowship as the key-note of the epistle,—the word fellowship, or communion, being understood in its proper scriptural sense of joint participation.

Adopting this idea, Bengel sought to find in the epistle a regular and systematic arrangement as follows: (1) The exordium (ch. i. 1-4); (2) The tractatio (ch. i. 5-v. 12); and (3) The conclusion (ch. v. 13-21). The tractatio, or main body of the epistle, he divided into a special and general part. The special part he considered as treating—(1) Of communion with God in light (ch. i. 5-10); (2) Of communion with the Son (ch. ii. 1-iii. 24); and (3) Of the confirmation and fruit of His indwelling by the Spirit (ch. iv. 1-21). The second part he regarded as corresponding with the first, and treating 'of the testimony of the Father, and Son, and Spirit.'

And lastly, he regarded the conclusion as corresponding with the exordium, recapitulating and reasserting the fellowship of the redeemed Church with the Three-one God. According to this view, the fundamental principle of the epistle is to assert and establish the communion of believers with the Three-one God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ. If this view were correct, we would have here a formal exhibition of the Trinity in relation to believers. And yet we presume to think that this arrangement is not natural, and that it is difficult, if not impossible, to find in the epistle such a systematic discussion of the Trinity.

The following arrangement we think more natural, and exhibiting more clearly the scope of the apostle's reasoning; and we believe it will be found equally to illustrate the doctrine we are considering. Regarding the first four verses as the exordium, showing the design of the apostle in writing, the main body of the epistle will be found to exhibit the fellowship which believers have with God, and the assurance they possess of its reality. It may be arranged as follows: (1) From ch. i. 5—ii. 28, starting with the principle that 'God is light,' he shows that we have fellowship with Him by walking in the light—holding and exemplifying the truth as it is in Jesus. (2) From ch. ii. 29—v. 6, starting with



the fundamental thought that 'God is righteous,' he treats in a similar manner of our fellowship with Him in righteousness. From His nature as righteous, he argues that 'he that doeth righteousness is born of God' (ch. ii. 29), and shows the necessity of a new birth, and a life of holiness, in order to this fellowship. Not, however, that in these two sections he always keeps these two views separate and distinct; on the contrary, he brings them together at several points in both, showing in the first that the knowledge of God and of the Son necessarily involves the keeping of His commandments; and in the second, that the righteousness of life described is dependent upon the faith of the truth. But we are satisfied that a close examination will show that the leading thought of the first section is fellowship in light, and of the second, fellowship in righteousness. This second section may be divided into two subordinate portions, the first describing our fellowship with God in righteousness, in its purity, and thus in its contrariety to a world lying in wickedness; and the second describing its basis as love. As God is love, so we have fellowship with Him in love, and believing Him in His love, we keep His commandments and overcome the world. And then (3) in ch. v. 6-21, the writer shows the assurance we have that we are of the truth, that Jesus Christ

is the Son of God, and that we have eternal life through Him.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot fully illustrate this view of the scope of the epistle, but we believe that the more closely we examine it, the more clearly it will appear, that the above outline gives a correct view of its general design. We have said this much in consequence of its bearings on our present subject. As we look at each section in order, we shall find that in each the three persons in the Trinity are introduced in their appropriate relations to the work of our salvation.

Thus in the first section (ch. i. 5—ii. 27), in which our fellowship with God in light is described, besides the references to the Father as light (ch. i. 5), the object of intercession (ch. ii. 1), the great object of spiritual knowledge (ch. ii. 13), and the Son as the source of cleansing from sin (ch. i. 7), as our advocate (ch. ii. 1), and our propitiation (ch. ii. 2), the writer, toward the conclusion, warning his readers against the errors of false teachers, points out that

<sup>1</sup> Some would prefer stating the arrangement of this part of the epistle in a slightly different manner. Instead of the first two sections, the latter divided into two sub-sections, they would make three sections, exhibiting respectively fellowship with God in light, fellowship with Him in righteousness, and fellowship with Him in love. For some time the writer hesitated which to adopt, but the difference amounts to little more than a difference in the mode of stating the matter. The fundamental thoughts and general scope are the same both ways.

their knowledge was by the teaching of the Holy Ghost (ch. ii. 20): 'Ye have an unction,' or anointing, descriptive, as we have already seen, of the Spirit's influence, 'from the Holy One, and know all things.' The discussion in this part of the subject he closes by connecting their spiritual enlightenment with each of the three persons of the Godhead. It has God the Father as its great and ultimate object; but all revelation of Him is through the Son, and our enjoyment of the knowledge of the former depends on the attitude of the soul to the latter. So that, as he says (vers. 22, 23): 'Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the FATHER and the SON. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.' But this knowledge is practically enjoyed only through the teaching of the Spirit. Accordingly he adds (ver. 27): 'But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.' Thus the fellowship we have with God as light, is in connection with the manifestation of Him through the Son, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the second section, starting with the principle that 'God is righteous' (ch. ii. 29), the apostle, in the first half, insists on the necessity of our being born to a new life of righteousness, in order to fellowship with Him. Thus we form a contrast with, and actually come into collision with, the world lying in wickedness, whose influence we overcome. But his argument culminates again in presenting the subject in its relation to the three persons in the Trinity. Born of God, thus doing righteousness, and thus showing that we are of the truth, our consciences testify to our uprightness, and we have a rejoicing freedom of access to God (ch. iii. 19-22): 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. . . . Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward GOD,' etc. That the Father is specially referred to here is evident from the next verse, where it is asserted that only by faith in Him have we fellowship in righteousness with God (ver. 23): 'This is His commandment, That we believe on the name of His SON JESUS CHRIST,' etc. But the actual enjoyment of such fellowship is through the practical working of the Spirit upon our hearts (ver. 24): 'He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him: and hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the SPIRIT

which He hath given us' (*ἔδωκεν*),—words similar to the promise, 'whom the Father will give' (John xiv. 16). We must observe the form of expression used here. It is not 'because of' the Spirit, but 'from' the Spirit. The expression points out not merely that our knowledge of Christ abiding in us is from the possession of the Spirit as an evidence, but from His action in producing in us such a change of character. Thus our fellowship with God in righteousness is with the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit.

The next paragraph (ch. iv. 1–6) is generally regarded as parenthetical, but it simply guards those addressed against mistake as to the work of the Spirit; and points out tests by which His operations may be distinguished from the spirit of error, such as confessing Christ another Spirit than that of the world, and listening to God's truth.

In the second part of this section (ch. iv. 7–v. 5) the apostle points out, as the ground of our fellowship with Him in righteousness, our fellowship with Him in love. Here again, starting with the idea that 'God is love,' he insists upon the idea that we have communion with Him only by manifesting love, and that thus we will keep His commandments and overcome the world. But here again we have the three persons of the Godhead united in the

work of bringing us into this condition. God, out of love, gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (vers. 9, 10): 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' God is unseen, but if we manifest love, we have fellowship with Him (ver. 12): 'No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.' But the pledge and sign of this is the Holy Spirit, who is the source of all holy principles, whose first fruit is love, and who is known by His fruits (ver. 13): 'Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His SPIRIT.' But this is only through our recognising the Father's love in sending His Son, and by our confessing the Son as thus sent of the Father (vers. 14, 15): 'And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the SON OF GOD, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.' Thus our fellowship with God in love originates with God the Father, is mediated by the Son, and effected and evidenced by the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit.

There remains the conclusion (ch. v. 12-21), which treats especially of the testimony, by which we are assured of the truth as it is in Jesus, and of our salvation by Him. This is ascribed to God (ver. 9): 'If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the witness' (or testimony, the original word being the same) 'of God which He hath testified of His Son.' Then we have the Son, as the great subject and substance of the testimony (ver. 11): 'This is the record' (or testimony), 'that God hath given us eternal life; and this life is in His Son.' But at the same time we have presented to us the Spirit as the great agent in testifying (ver. 6): 'It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth.' In this view, the passage teaches important truth regarding the connection of the three with our assurance of the truth.

But we do not think that this exhausts the meaning of the apostle. The genuineness of ver. 7, according to all modern critics, must be given up; but yet a close examination of the whole passage will show the three divine persons united in testimony, so that in an important sense 'there *are three* that bear record in heaven.' He commences with the Son (ver. 6): 'This is He that came by water and blood; not by water only, but by water and

blood.' He is not only the subject of testimony, as in vers. 9 and 11, but by these He actually testifies, for it is added (ver. 8): 'And there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, *the water, and the blood.*' Whatever be the allusion in these last words, they certainly refer to some portions of Christ's work, which form a testimony to the truth of His being the Son of God. There can be little doubt that the reference is to His baptism and death, the beginning and the end of His Messianic work on earth,—the one His initiation into His public ministry, when, though sinless Himself, He placed Himself in union with fallen man, to fulfil all righteousness on their behalf, and when He was attested as the Son of God by the Father's voice, and the descent of the Spirit;—the other, the completion of the whole. It is worthy of note, that this same writer, in his Gospel, speaks of both these as establishing the Sonship of Christ. At ch. i. 34 he represents the Baptist as saying from the scene at His baptism: 'I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.' And again at the crucifixion, when from Christ's side, pierced by the spear, there flowed blood and water, he says (ch. xix. 35): 'He that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.'

In the next place, the apostle refers to the Spirit



as the agent who actually testifies in us (ver. 6): 'And it is the SPIRIT that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth,' absolute truth; hence called by our Lord the Spirit of truth. He is put forth prominently as *the* witness—the living and active agent in establishing the truth in the hearts of men. It is true that He is associated with the water and the blood, making the number required by the law to render testimony valid: 'There are three that bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood.' But they are not witnesses without Him. Hence, as our Saviour taught, the world receives not the Son, but by the Spirit testifying of Him: 'He shall testify of me' (John xv. 26); 'He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you' (xvi. 14).

But, in the last place, the apostle ascribes this testimony to God the Father as the director of all,—as the source from which all proceeds (ver. 9): 'If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater.' That God the Father is meant here, is evident from His being immediately contrasted with the Son: 'For this is the witness' (or testimony) 'of God, that He hath testified of His Son.' Thus, 'he that believeth hath the witness in himself,' by his experience of the purifying and reconciling influence of Christ's work, and by the

Spirit who works savingly in Him, and at the same time evidences His own work. And thus the whole result is, as stated in ver. 20: 'And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.'

Thus our assurance is from God originally as the source of all; it is by the Son objectively in His sanctifying and atoning power, indicated in His baptism and death, and symbolized by the water and blood from His side; and it is subjectively by the Spirit. So that, in reality, we have here the three that bear record in heaven.

## THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

Of the catholic epistles, it only remains to notice that of Jude. In vers. 20, 21 we have the following words: 'But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the HOLY GHOST, keep yourselves in the love of GOD, looking for the mercy of our LORD JESUS CHRIST unto eternal life.' As Bengel remarks on this passage, 'Jude mentions the Father, the Son, and the Holy

Spirit; he mentions faith, hope, and love.' Whatever be the relation of the clauses to each other, it will be seen that the passage contains an express reference to the three persons of the Godhead, and the duty of Christians, in working out their own salvation, to each of them. We prefer taking the words as they stand, and regard the first two clauses as dependent on each other: 'Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost;' that is, by praying in the Holy Ghost, and by so doing, 'keep yourselves in the love of God;' continue in the enjoyment of His complacential affection, ever sustained by the prospect of the eternal reward, 'looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' Some, however, understand 'the love of God' to mean our love to Him. In this view, perhaps, the passage contains a still more impressive exhibition of the doctrine of the Trinity. As Liddon says, 'Their life is fashioned in devotion to the blessed Trinity. It is a life of prayer; their souls live in the Holy Spirit as in an atmosphere. It is a life of persevering love, whereof the almighty Father is the object. It is a life of expectation; they look forward to the indulgent mercy which the Lord Jesus will show them at His coming, and the issue of His compassion is eternal life.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures*, p. 302.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE APOCALYPSE.

**T**HERE only remains to be considered the bearing of the Apocalypse on our subject. The main body of the book is occupied with a series of magnificent visions, in which is represented in mysterious symbols the government of God over the world in relation to His Church, as exercised by the God-man Mediator, the Lamb slain, but now elevated to the throne of universal power. Perhaps in no part even of the word of God have we such splendid descriptions of the Redeemer in His exaltation, exercising the delegated authority of the Father, in ruling among the troubled elements of human commotion for the good of His Church. It must be admitted, however, that while the glories of the Father and the Son are thus set forth in a manner not to be found elsewhere, even within the pages of inspiration, the Holy Ghost does not come so prominently into view. Still there will be enough to show that this wonderful book concurs

with the rest of the New Testament in ascribing due honour to each of the Blessed Three.

At the outset, the authority of the book is ascribed to each of the persons in the Godhead. Thus, while it is called 'the Revelation of Jesus Christ' (ch. i. 1), and He is represented as the witness who testifies (ver. 5), and whose testimony John delivers (ver. 2), it is yet ascribed to God the Father (ver. 1), 'which God gave unto him,' and is called 'the word of God' (ver. 2); and yet John receives it under the influence of the Spirit (ver. 10; see also ch. iv. 2, xvii. 3, xxi. 10), and all the churches (the seven as representing the various conditions of the universal Church) are called on to receive it as the words of the third person of the Trinity (ch. ii. 7, etc.): 'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.'

Then the book opens with a benediction, in which the Three are as plainly noted as in the apostolic benediction (ch. i. 4, 5): 'Grace be to you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come' (or which comes. This title is equivalent to the term Jehovah, and is expressive of 'pure, absolute, and unchangeable being,' and is here plainly descriptive of the Father—see also ch. iv. 8); 'and from the seven Spirits before the throne.' The number seven was used among the

Jews to express the perfection of any quality (Job v. 19 ; Ps. xii. 6 ; Prov. vi. 16 ; Matt. xii. 45 ; Prov. xxvi. 19, ix. 1), and here expresses the fullness and variety of the Spirit's influences, which, according to 1 Cor. xii. 4-7, are the manifestation of one and the same Spirit ; so that this same writer, who in this and some other passages (ch. iii. 1, iv. 5, v. 6) speaks of Him as seven, again describes Him as simply 'the Spirit' (ch. ii. 11, xiv. 13, xxii. 17). Their being before the throne, describes Him as being ready to be employed in the service of the Church. 'And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth,'—the great revealer of God, by His resurrection the pledge of life to all in Him, and the sovereign of the world,—in other words, the Prophet, Priest, and King of His Church. 'The threefold *from*,' Hengstenberg remarks,—'*from* Him who is so, and *from* the seven Spirits, and *from* Jesus Christ,—is deserving of notice in this respect, that it involves a portion of equality. This implies a certain independence of the Spirit beside the Father and the Son. The derivation of grace and peace from the Spirit, not less than from the Father and the Son, points to the adorable Trinity.'

The prophetic visions of the rapt seer are intro-

duced by one of the grandest of them all, in the 4th and 5th chapters, in which God's government of the Church, and of the world in relation to her, is presented in pictures of celestial magnificence. First, a door is opened in heaven, and he sees a throne, and One that sat upon it (ch. iv. 8-11). That the person thus presented to his view is divine, is evident from the fact that immediately divine honours are given to Him. That the Father is specially denoted, is evident from the fact that He is distinguished from the Son (ch. vi. 16, vii. 10) and from the Spirit (ver. 5). Besides, He is expressly spoken of as 'God that sitteth upon the throne' (ch. xix. 4); and the title is appropriate to Him, because the kingdom was originally the Father's, and continues His, though administered by the Son. John adds (ch. iv. 5): 'And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;' as already explained, the Spirit of God in the completeness of His gifts, which are bestowed by the Father.

In the second part of the vision, in ch. v., we have the Son presented to us, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb as it had been slain; but now, in the midst of the throne, who is found competent to unfold the divine purposes regarding the future of His Church, which no other in heaven or earth could

accomplish. In this description we have no difficulty in recognising Christ in His royal dignity, and again in His sacrificial character, as the High Priest of His Church. Accordingly, the saved from among men ascribe all glory to Him as their Redeemer (ver. 9): 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,' etc. But to Him as well as to the Father, and in conjunction with Him, are immediately ascribed all divine honours from the whole of God's intelligent creation (ver. 13): 'Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.' But He also is represented as having the Spirit to dispense unto the children of men (ver. 6): 'Having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.' This representation of the Spirit in His relation to the Father and the Son, in the carrying out of the scheme of redemption, is in beautiful accordance with what we have already seen to be the teaching of the word of God in those portions already considered. We have not entered into a particular consideration of the vision itself; but



it will be thus seen that in the gorgeous picture which it presents of the divine government of the world, it recognises the three divine persons in the Godhead,—the Father, as the supreme Governor of the universe; the Son, as once slain, but now exalted to the throne of mediatorial sovereignty; and the Spirit, as sent forth by the Father and the Son to carry into effect upon mankind the gracious purposes of a three-one God.

In the body of the work, as we have already mentioned, it is the Father and the Son who are specially brought before us, but still the Spirit is presented to us in accordance with His position in the Trinity. How beautifully, for example, is He introduced in ch. xiv. 12, 13! Describing the happy condition of those who, having faithfully maintained God's truth, and patiently suffered for its sake, shall witness the Church's deliverance from antichristian bondage, the apostle says: 'Here are they that keep the commandments of GOD, and the faith of JESUS. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the SPIRIT, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.'

The conclusion of the book (ch. xxi. 1-xxii. 5) presents, as it were, the winding up of the great

drama of time, in a picture of a new order of things, free from all the commotions of our troubled earth (ch. xxi. 1): 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.' We cannot lay much stress on an argument founded on our interpretation of symbols, at least as against gainsayers; but where the word of God has indicated their meaning, and we apply them under the guidance of such infallible interpretation, they will contribute largely to confirm, edify, and comfort believers. It is therefore interesting to note, in the apostle's description of the glories of the New Jerusalem, that while the blessings and happiness of its inhabitants are referred particularly to the Father and the Son as their source and medium, in emblems borrowed from the Old Testament worship, we find the salvation, as actually enjoyed by the redeemed, exhibited under the same figures, though cast in loftier moulds, which are employed, both in the Old and New Testaments, to represent the beneficent working of the Holy Spirit.

First, we have God the Father dwelling among men, the full realization of what was prefigured to Israel by God dwelling in the tabernacle in visible symbol (ch. xxi. 3): 'I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is

with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.'

Then, after a further description of their happiness, and also of the redeemed Church, described as the Lamb's wife, we have, secondly, the Son associated with the Father (ver. 22): 'I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.' But the position of the Son is more distinctly defined in the verse immediately following: 'The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.' The glory of God which is here spoken of, and which is also mentioned in the 11th verse, where the city is said to have 'the glory of God,' refers to the Shekinah, so often called the glory of God, the cloud of mingled light and darkness, which in the tabernacle stood above the mercy-seat, between the cherubims. This was the visible emblem of the divine presence, through which He manifested Himself to the children of Israel: 'There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony.' This pointed forward to God manifesting Himself, through Christ, in our nature, as is evident from John i. 14: 'The

Word was made flesh, and dwelt' (or shekinah) 'among us ; and we beheld His glory ;' but its full realization is in future glory, where, as is here taught, while the blessedness of the redeemed consists in the Father dwelling among them, this is through the Son, who is the true Shekinah. He is the true temple, in whom the Father manifests Himself, and through whom the saved enjoy uninterrupted fellowship with Him.

But it is added (ch. xxii. 1, 2) : ' He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life; which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.' Now the emblem of water, and a river of water, is one of those most frequently used, both in the Old and New Testaments, to describe the life-giving influence of the Spirit, as He goes forth with the gospel to bless the world. Isa. xlv. 3 : ' I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground : I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.' Zech. xiv. 8 : ' It shall be that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem ; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the

hinder sea: in summer and winter shall it be.' (See also Ps. xlvi. 4; Joel iii. 18.) Similar is the vision of Ezekiel (ch. xlvii.), where a stream of living water issues from under the threshold of the temple, carrying life in its onward course, its banks covered with unfading bloom, and blessed with trees yielding fruit according to their months, and their leaves for medicine. The representations of the New Testament are exactly equivalent (John vii. 38, 39): 'He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.'

Now, when the same emblem, only sublimed to meet the higher glories it is intended to express, is here used, can we refuse to interpret it in the same way as describing the Spirit of God as the source of those streams of life which bless the eternal city? When the first and second persons of the Trinity, as manifested to the redeemed Church, are represented by the same emblems by which their manifestation to the Church on earth is represented, and when, immediately after, we have an emblem which as invariably represents the operation of the third, can we refuse it the same interpretation as elsewhere? The representation, too, of the river, as flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, is in beautiful

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accordance with those other passages of Scripture which represent the influences of the Spirit as proceeding from the Father and the Son. If this be correct, we will then have the three persons in the Godhead presented to us as concerned in the life, salvation, and blessedness of the Church triumphant, as they are of the Church militant below, — the Father dwelling with His people, but manifesting Himself, and communicating all good, through the medium of the Son; and from them, by the agency of the Spirit, rivers of pleasures flowing into the souls of all the saved.

We may remark that we have a very similar description of the happiness of the redeemed in ch. vii. 16, 17: 'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the LAMB which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' The description given of this white-robed company as having palms in their hands, and the whole imagery of the vision, contain an allusion to the Feast of Tabernacles, which the children of Israel observed in the land of Canaan in commemoration of their wandering in the wilderness. The promises of freedom from hunger, thirst, and the burning heat of the sun, and of corre-

sponding supplies, have reference to the inconveniences of their condition at that time. We have these ascribed to God and to the Lamb; and as to the living waters, we need only compare them with the words of our Lord at the last Feast of Tabernacles which He attended on earth, to see the allusion to the Holy Spirit (John vii. 38, 39).

As the apostle had at the beginning of the book declared its authority, as from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, so, as he concludes (ch. xxii. 6-17), he repeats this truth in the most emphatic manner, and solemnly appeals to his readers, in the name of each of the three, to receive its contents and obey its voice (ver. 6): 'The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done.' The latest critical editors, instead of 'God of the holy prophets,' read 'God of the spirits of the prophets;' and according to 1 Cor. xiv. 32, the phrase, 'spirits of the prophets,' expresses the special gifts of inspiration, in the prophets severally, according to the varied working of the Holy Ghost. If this reading be correct, the verse will recognise the Spirit as well as the Father as the author of the sayings of this book. At all events, he speaks of the Spirit almost immediately afterwards (ver. 17). But it is added, 'I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you

these things in the churches.' Thus the passage presents the agency of the three divine persons in making known the wonderful revelations of this book, and it thus, at the close as at the beginning, claims our attention as sanctioned by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And as this book was intended to close the volume of inspired truth, the words may apply to the whole Scripture, and thus give additional emphasis to the warning with which it is sealed up (vers. 18, 19): 'If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book,' etc.

The concluding appeal, however, not only represents the book as from the authority of the three persons in the Godhead, but is worthy of further consideration, as presenting the adorable Three joining in a last warning and invitation to men ere the inspired volume is finally closed. As the book commences with a benediction in the name of each of the three persons in the Godhead, so it concludes with a message of salvation from the same glorious Three; and it is worthy of remark, that this is done under titles exactly corresponding in the two cases. It has been a question with interpreters, whether the passage from the 7th to the 13th verse refers to the Father or the Son. But the title under which He speaks, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the first



and the last,' is used in this book as a proper title of the Father (see ch. i. 8, xxi. 6), though it may be applied to the Son, as He is really and truly God. It corresponds with the distinctive appellation of the Father in the benediction (ch. i. 4, comp. ver. 8). At first sight the words in the 12th verse, 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me,' would rather seem to refer to Christ; yet, after all, we must regard the judgment as the Father's, though exercised by the God-man Mediator, as His vicegerent. Hence it is said (1 Peter i. 17): 'The Father, who without respect of persons judgeth every man according to his works.'<sup>1</sup> As Hengstenberg observes, the coming is the coming of God, though in the person of His Son. For these reasons, we agree with those interpreters who regard the words as referring to the Father.<sup>1</sup> At all events, it is admitted that it is God the Father who is represented as speaking in the 6th verse: 'The Lord God of the spirits of the prophets hath sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass.' Then hear His solemn warnings: 'Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.' 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is

<sup>1</sup> The reader will find this subject fully discussed in Hengstenberg's Commentary on this and corresponding passages.

righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.' 'Blessed are they that do His commandments' (or, as some read, 'that wash their robes'), 'that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.'

But what God the Father solemnly declares, God the Son, the faithful and true witness, as He is called in the opening benediction (ch. i. 5), testifies to men for their warning and salvation. He, as Mediator, is the agent through whom the Father makes known His will; and yet He speaks to men from His own independent claims (ver. 16): 'I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star,' who usher in the glories of the eternal day.

But, not to end God's revelation of mercy with such awful denunciations, the last person of the Trinity, the Spirit of grace, the last hope of humanity, is heard interposing, in His own name and through the Church inspired by Him, with the most tender entreaty to men to partake of the

blessings of salvation ere it be too late (ver. 17): 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.'

And shall any of the children of men neglect a salvation on which the three persons of the Trinity have been employed, and that from eternity, and which they now separately and conjunctly press upon our acceptance? Will we not hear His voice *now*? 'Do you think to do in a trice what they have been doing from eternity? or do you think to do it when you will? These three persons all do and must concur in our salvation when it is effected. And thinkest thou to have these states to come together at thy beck and at thy call? Thou mayest sooner think to order the great conjunction of the stars and planets. Job xxxviii. 31-33: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? or, canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?"—that is, canst thou order their motion, so as that their conjunctions or meetings should fall out when thou pleasest? which, when they meet, have special influences upon this lower world. Canst thou set that clock? And thinkest thou (that canst not

move a man's heart on earth) to call the Trinity together when thou pleasest, to despatch thy business for thee? Be sure, therefore, that thou take their time, when thou feelest the Spirit moving thee; then all those wheels are a-moving, and then take thy season.'<sup>1</sup>

If He be thwarted and grieved away, the sinner's last hope is gone. 'As God has not *another Son* to offer another sacrifice for sin,—so that he by whom His sacrifice is despised can have none remaining for him,—no more hath He *another Spirit* to make that sacrifice effectual unto us, if the Holy Ghost, in His work, be despised and rejected.'<sup>2</sup> If He depart, 'there remaineth only a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.'

TO FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST,  
THE GOD WHOM WE ADORE,  
BE GLORY AS IT WAS, AND IS,  
AND SHALL BE EVERMORE.

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<sup>1</sup> Goodwin, vii. 540, Nichol's edition.

<sup>2</sup> Owen, iii. 28, Goold's edition.

## CONCLUSION.

**W**E have thus reviewed that revelation in which, by progressive steps, 'at sundry times and in divers manners,' God has unfolded His great plan of mercy to fallen men; and if we are not entirely mistaken, the result of our inquiries has been to show the working of a three-one God, in the whole teachings of Scripture on the subject. We have confined our investigation to those passages which distinctly recognise the three persons of the Godhead. We have thus omitted a large portion of the word of God strongly bearing in the same direction. We have passed over not only those passages which speak of one of the three in terms implying divinity, or which show His working in redemption, but also all those, in which two are spoken of, in their relation to one another or their co-operation for man's salvation, as Father and Son, Father and Spirit, or Son and Spirit. These (and they are numerous) are scarcely less important in their bearings upon this subject than those we have

been considering. Thus, for example, the constant association of the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer and benediction, as in the salutations of the epistles, affords convincing evidence that both are divine; and if two are admitted to be so, the admission of a Trinity readily follows, for scarcely any have held to a mere duality in the Godhead.

But there is another class of passages worthy of more distinct notice. We allude to those in which the two persons are named, and their respective parts in man's redemption described, while the work of the third is referred to, though He is not named. This may be observed particularly regarding the work of the Spirit, which is not unfrequently ascribed to the Father as the primal source of all divine operations. These passages may not be as strong as arguments against opponents as those adduced; but to the humble believer they will be nearly as forcible, not only because a mere duality is scarcely pled for by any, but because, by comparing scripture with scripture, he sees that the three are implied if not expressed. We shall notice two merely as samples. The first is Matt. xi. 25-27: 'At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for

so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.' Here it is plain that the Father and the Son are spoken of in terms implying supreme divinity. But when the Father is spoken of as revealing spiritual things to babes, we know from the teaching of our Lord and His apostles, that this is done by the agency of the Holy Ghost. John xvi. 13: 'When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will lead you into all truth.' 1 Cor. ii. 10: 'God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.'

The other passage is Heb. xiii. 20, 21: 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.' Here, as in the last case, the Father and Jesus Christ, under the title of Lord, are spoken of in terms implying that they are both divine. But we know that the work ascribed to the Father, 'making us perfect in every good work to do His will,' etc., is effected by the agency of the Spirit. So that, in these two passages, there

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is an actual reference to the three persons of the Godhead, though only two are named.

We may also notice that there are passages which do not name the persons in the Godhead, but which refer to their respective offices in a manner which accords with the evangelical scheme, and thus affords corroboratory evidence of its truth. As an example, we may simply refer to the Lord's Prayer. This consists of six petitions, three of which refer to God's honour, and three to man's wants; but it will be seen, on examination, that each of these two divisions has reference to the three persons of the Trinity in the order of their subsistence, and in the order and relation of their offices in redemption. Thus:

Hallowed be Thy Name, . . . . .	To the FATHER.
Thy kingdom come, . . . . .	Through the SON.
Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven, . . . . .	By the SPIRIT.
Give us this day our daily bread, . . . . .	To the FATHER.
Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, . . . . .	Through the SON.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, . . . . .	By the SPIRIT.

Thus, as Tholuck remarks, 'the attentive reader, who has otherwise learned the doctrine of the Trinity, will find a distinct reference to it in the arrangement of this prayer. The first petition, in each of the first and second portions of the prayer,



refers to God as the Creator and Preserver; the second, to God as the Redeemer; and the third, to God the Holy Spirit.'

We have thought that, in like manner, the angels' song (Luke ii. 14), on which there has been considerable discussion, and which, from the contrast of the earth and the heaven, so many critics have been anxious to read in two parallel clauses, might be explained in the same way. May not the clauses read as three, and refer to the three persons in the Godhead, as follows?

Glory to God in the highest, . . . . .	To the FATHER.
On earth peace, . . . . .	Through the SON.
Good-will to men, . . . . .	By the SPIRIT.

While the first undoubtedly expresses the position of the Father, the two latter, we think, do express the respective works of the Son and the Spirit, peace being expressive of the reconciliation between heaven and earth effected by the second person of the Trinity, and the good-will to men describing the manifestation of God's kindness in bringing men to the enjoyment of salvation by the Spirit.

In our examination of the passages brought under review, we have endeavoured to ascertain exactly the mind of the Spirit of God. We have availed ourselves of all helps within our reach, to ascertain

the precise meaning of the words, and the connection in which they stand; but we cannot expect that our conclusions in regard to all the passages considered will be accepted by other minds. But here the same remark is applicable that is made by Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, regarding the undesigned coincidences, between Paul's epistles and the Acts of the Apostles, on which he grounds an argument for the authenticity of these writings, that each instance stands on its own merits, and is entirely independent of the others, so that if it should be set aside as invalid, it would not affect the value and force of any of the others. If any reader thinks that any passage will not bear what we have laid upon it, let him dismiss it. We would indeed ask that such a conclusion be not adopted till after careful inquiry, as closer examination of the words of God often reveals beneath the surface aspects of truth which are hidden from the eye of the ordinary observer. Still, if the view we have given of any passage be not admitted, or even if a number should be set aside, the conclusions drawn from the others will remain unassailable, and the abandonment of indefensible points will only strengthen our main positions.

It must be admitted, too, that the truth is reflected, in these passages, with various degrees of

brilliancy. In some it is presented so dimly as only to be observed by careful study, while in others it is obvious to the most unobserving eye. But our argument is not a chain of reasoning which is destroyed if a single link be broken, and which is no stronger than the weakest part. It is eminently cumulative; and each stage, according to its own weight, adds to the value and force of the whole. Each, according to its own light, rays forth some aspect of the perfection and working of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and the whole forms a cluster of jewels in the crown of Emmanuel, which exhibits in full radiance the glory of the Three-one God.

In proceeding now to notice the value of our argument, we must remark at the outset that the truth of the doctrine is not dependent on the view we have presented. Independent of all our arguments, the doctrine stands unshaken upon other grounds. We have a sufficient amount of more direct evidence of the divinity, and yet the unity of the Blessed Three, to possess our souls in confidence upon its certainty. If our argument be good, there will be a large amount of confirmatory testimony. But we must still remember that, independent of this, the doctrine rests as immoveably as ever on the foundation on which it has stood for

ages in the creed of Christendom and the hearts of believers.

Keeping this in view, we remark regarding the value of this evidence, that primarily it is confirmatory of what has been established on other grounds. But this is not a matter of inferior moment. Every judge and lawyer knows the benefit of the corroborating evidence of circumstances, even where the direct proof is clear. In many instances positive testimony would have doubt thrown upon it, if it were not confirmed in this manner. Whatever be the point to be established, it cannot have stood alone. It must have been connected with other incidents and other facts, and the absence of incidental evidence of this kind tends to throw doubt even upon the most direct testimony. But when all the circumstances accord with and corroborate the positive evidence, the last shadow of ground for doubt is swept away, and assurance rendered doubly sure. So is it in the present instance. The doctrine of the Trinity stands on its own independent and immoveable basis, in the distinct declarations of the word of God; but the fact that we find the doctrine permeating the whole of God's revelation of mercy, affords striking confirmatory evidence of its truth and importance, to the joy and comfort of the humble believer.

But we do not admit that the evidence afforded in this way is *only* confirmatory. We believe that it has all the value of positive testimony. We believe that what has been adduced, taken all together, affords sufficient evidence of itself to establish the doctrine, and affords so much additional testimony in favour of a truth otherwise clearly revealed. Referring again to evidence in a human court of judicature, the circumstantial evidence may be so clear and so complete as to enforce conviction as decidedly as any direct testimony could do. Indeed, when complete, it is held to be the best kind of evidence; and in the present instance, we believe that the manner in which incidentally, and as it were undesignedly, the truth of the doctrine is assumed, will to many minds be the most convincing form of testimony. Dr. Candlish, in his remarks on the first chapter of Genesis, says: 'This truth, indeed, is not so much directly stated in the Scriptures as it is all along assumed; and we might reasonably expect it to be so. God is not in the written word introduced for the first time to men. He speaks, and is spoken of, as one previously known, because previously revealed. And if the doctrine of the Trinity be true, He must have been known, more or less explicitly, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. An express and formal declaration,

then, of this mystery of His being was not needed; nor was it to be expected. *The most natural and convincing proof of it, in these circumstances, is to trace it, as from the very first taken for granted and recognised, in all that is said of the divine proceedings.*

We do not know how far the doctrine was made known previous to a *written* revelation; but the above quotation, we believe, accurately presents the state of the case, that the doctrine was understood and implied in all God's communications to man. Such is the aspect in which the view we have taken presents the matter. The passages adduced do not generally assert the divinity of each or all of the three persons in the Godhead, but they represent the three in combination in a way in which they never associate any creature with the Most High. They ascribe to each works, such as they assign only to God, or which imply divine power. They exhibit them in relations to each other, which are never confounded, and to which no other can be admitted. They exhibit their concurrent, yet distinctive working, especially in redemption, in a manner irreconcilable with any other supposition than that of three divine persons in one undivided essence. They thus, in fact, take for granted the doctrine of the Trinity, much as they do the doctrine of God's existence. They assume it; but this con-

stant assuming it without proving it, will, to those who examine the matter carefully, ever appear the most convincing evidence of its truth, just as, in never proving and scarcely stopping to assert the existence of God, the Bible is the book of purest Theism ever given to men.

As to the amount of evidence adduced, it must be kept in view that it is only a portion even of the kind of testimony we have been considering that has been adduced. All those passages which speak of one, or even two, of the persons of the Godhead, in a manner which implies the same conclusion, have been omitted; and we have only considered those in which the whole three are either named or referred to. But we submit whether the amount is not all that was to be expected under the circumstances, and greater than is generally supposed. It must be remembered, too, that the Old Testament was especially designed to establish monotheism; and that large portions of both Testaments are necessarily occupied with much that does not directly touch upon this doctrine, in teaching the practical duties of life, or in exhibiting the outward vicissitudes and internal order of the Church.

But we cannot but observe how generally, as the great central truths of salvation are described, they are grouped round the three persons in the God-

head. As the great redemption was at first only dimly revealed, the doctrine of the Trinity appears as if written with sympathetic ink, on the same ground, to be brought out by the light of after revelation, as it were, in illuminated capitals. And as revelation progressed, like 'the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day,' and God's great purposes of mercy were gradually unfolded, so did the doctrine of a tri-personal Jehovah stand forth prominently to the eye and faith of God's believing children, until, when the redemption was achieved, and the light of revelation reached its noontide brilliancy in the fulness of apostolic inspiration, the doctrine of the three divine persons concurring in our salvation appears as if written with a sunbeam on every page of God's communications to man. Thus, while the Bible is the most monotheistic book in existence, yet, from the first page of Genesis to the last of Revelation, its monotheism is not the cold and sterile monotheism of Mahomet or Socinus, but one which admits three divine hypostases in one infinite nature.

In taking a review of the passages we have considered, the candid reader cannot but observe how uniformly the sacred writers introduce the agency of the Blessed Three in reference to every part of the Christian salvation. In the counsels of eternity,



in which the scheme was determined and arranged ; in the creation of the world, as the theatre on which redemption was to be achieved ; in all its garniture, and in the varied natural life, by which it was fitted to be the abode of those who were to be the subjects of saving mercy ; in the preparing and furnishing of the Mediator for His work ; in the execution in the fulness of time of the glorious plan, and in its application to the hearts of sinners ; in revealing God's will to men, and convincing them of the truth of His word ; in each blessing of the covenant, in our justification, adoption, regeneration, and sanctification ; in our establishment in the faith ; in the motives and means of practical holiness, and of each duty of a religious life ; in the exercise of devotion ; in the comforts and privileges of the children of God ; in our support under trial, our assurance of present and hope of future salvation ; in our final perseverance ; in the gifts of all the members of the Church, in the administration and success of all its ordinances, and in her building up as a holy temple to the Lord ; in the government of the world ; in the resurrection and final glory of the redeemed,—in a word, in the great salvation as a whole, and in each particular part thereof, and in the arrangement of the universe in subserviency to its accomplishment, we find everywhere, according

to the representation of the sacred writers, the threefold, yet united, action of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Or we may test the matter otherwise. Take the writings of the most decided Trinitarian, of either ancient or modern times, not where he is expressly treating of this doctrine, but where he is expounding the Christian system at large, and would we find the Sacred Three so frequently referred to as they are in the same space in the writings of the inspired penmen of the New Testament? or would we find their agency and relations so constantly introduced in connection with every subject on which they treat, whether doctrine or devotion, privilege or practice? If not, then the sacred writers are more Trinitarian than Evangelical Trinitarians, not indeed in dogmatic assertion of the truth, but in the manner in which it enters into their whole spiritual life.

But is it asked, why has not God presented the doctrine to us in exact and systematic formulas? and is it argued that this would have compelled the assent of men? We answer, that it by no means follows that if the doctrine were stated thus formally in the word of God, men would receive it implicitly. Faith is the gift of God, and the same spirit which refuses to see the divinity of Christ in the beginning

of John's Gospel, would find grounds for rejecting any statement of the truth that might be given.

But, further, it may be observed that the mode adopted is in accordance with God's procedure in other portions of His works, especially in nature around us. Why, we might ask, has God not arranged the rocks of the earth so as at once to exhibit to men the principles of geology? Why has He not distributed the plants of the earth in a defined order, in accordance with a sound system of botany? Why is it that He has left men to arrive at the knowledge of scientific principles on these and other subjects, only by the careful comparison of facts collected from distant quarters and with toilsome labour?

But we may see wise reasons for the mode adopted. Upon this we may quote the words of a recent judicious writer:—

'There is another reason against the providing in Scripture of a regular systematic statement of Christian doctrine. Suppose such a summary of gospel truths had been drawn up, and could have been contrived with such exquisite skill as to be sufficient and well adapted for all of every age and country, what would have been the probable result? It would have commanded the unhesitating assent of all Christians, who would, with deep veneration,

have stored up the very words of it in their memory, without any need of laboriously searching the rest of the Scriptures to ascertain its agreement with them, which is what we do (at least, are evidently called on to do) with a human exposition of the faith; and the absence of this labour, together with the tranquil security as to the correctness of their belief, which would have been thus generated, would have ended in a careless and contented apathy. There would have been . . . no call for vigilant attention in the investigation of truth; none of that effort of mind that is now requisite in comparing one passage with another, and collecting instruction from the scattered, oblique, and incidental references to various doctrines in the existing Scriptures; and, in consequence, none of that excitement of the best feelings, and that improvement of the heart, which are the natural and, doubtless, the designed result of a humble, diligent, and sincere study of the Christian Scriptures.

‘In fact, all study, properly so called, of the rest of Scripture—all lively interest in its perusal—would have nearly been superseded by such an inspired compendium of doctrine; to which alone, as by far the most convenient for that purpose, habitual reference would have been made in any question that might rise. Both would have been regarded, indeed, as of divine authority; but the

compendium as the fused and purified metal, the other as the mine containing the crude ore. And the compendium itself being not, like the existing Scriptures, that *from which* the faith is to be learned, but *the very thing to be learned*, would have come to be regarded by most with an indolent, unthinking veneration, which would have exercised little or no influence on the character. Their orthodoxy would have been, as it were, petrified, like the bodies of those animals we read of enclosed in the ice of the Polar regions—firm, fixed indeed, and preserved unchangeable, but cold, motionless, lifeless. It is only when our energies are roused, and our faculties exercised, and our attention kept awake by an ardent pursuit of truth, and anxious watchfulness against error,—when, in short, we feel ourselves to be doing something towards acquiring or retaining or improving our knowledge,—it is then only that that knowledge makes the requisite practical impression on the heart and on the conduct.<sup>1</sup>

In regard to the doctrine which we have been considering, compared with any human scheme of teaching it, how much more delightful and profitable to trace it, as it is unfolded in the word of God, by writers of every variety of temperament, mental power and training, in every form of com-

<sup>1</sup> *Cautions for the Times.*

position, in the simple incidents of the great biography, in the ever fresh story of redeeming love, in exalted poetry and logical argument, in practical exhortation and the heart experience of God's children, in prayer and doxology, in benediction and sacramental consecration, in the songs of angels, and in the light which streams through the unbarred gates of the celestial city! Surely the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and to every objector who would prefer God's giving us the truth in the exact formulas of systematic theology, we may reply in the words of Elihu: 'Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against Him? for He giveth not account of any of His matters.'

What a call to admiring wonder, devout gratitude, and heartfelt praise does the Christian salvation present, as we contemplate it in its relation to the glorious Trinity! In the redemption of every lost soul there is not only displayed the grace, the wisdom, and the power of the Most High, but there is the special working of each of the three persons of the Godhead in His peculiar properties, and in His relations to the others. They were joined in counsel when man was created (Gen. i. 26), foreseeing his fall, and providing for his recovery. They are each concerned, as we have seen, in every step of his

recovery, and they combine to crown Him with everlasting glory. But more remains. To use the words of another: 'It is not merely that the three persons of the Godhead are concerned and concurrent in the great salvation; it is not merely that the first person of the Godhead gives the second to redeem us, and that the third is given to quicken us, and put us in possession of the redemption wrought out; it is not merely that three persons, each of them divine, together one in the substance, power, and eternity of the undivided Godhead, unite to effect our restoration to the favour and image and glory of God;—not the three persons merely, but the most profound and peculiar and mysterious relations in which they stand toward each other, and all that is contained in these relations: *this* is what is brought forward into action, and made, in amazing love and wisdom, to yield various and multiplied elements of gracious and glorious arrangement and operation, combinedly uniting to achieve a result most worthy of the marvellous purpose, means, and causes that go to achieve it.'<sup>1</sup>

How exalted the honours of the children of God! To quote the same writer: 'There is one transcendent dignity that belongs to them, not merely in their peculiarly near relation to God, but in the

<sup>1</sup> *For. and Evan. Review.*

style, if we may so say, or tone of that spiritual estate into which they have been formed or moulded, in the perfecting of grace in their holy natures. And it is this: they bear traces of the glory of Godhead's tri-unity, such as unfallen, unredeemed beings cannot bear. "Who are these that are arrayed in white robes?" These are they who are where they are, and who are what they are, only because there is tri-unity in Godhead, and only because the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, and the Spirit eternally proceedeth from the Father and from the Son. Other creatures may shine with the reflected light of the attributes of God. To the ransomed of the Lord it is given on the behalf of Christ, to shine with the peculiar reflected glory of tri-unity of Godhead, and of all that the relations of the persons in the Godhead involve of the deepest glories, and love, and joy of their Lord. Yon bright seraph may be a proof that God is good, and wise, and mighty, and faithful, and holy, and full of love; but yon once lost child of Adam, now a king and a priest unto his Father, is a living proof that "there are three persons in the Godhead,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; that the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; and the Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *For. and Evan. Review.*



And then with what a grandeur does this invest the scheme of man's salvation, as thus the great means by which God presents to His creatures the profound and mysterious glories of the eternal Trinity in unity! All God's works praise Him. The heavens declare His glory, and the earth is full of His riches. They proclaim His perfections, especially His wisdom, power, and goodness. But even these attributes are more illustriously displayed in the scheme of redemption than in the natural world, so that most strikingly does God's glory shine in the face of Jesus Christ. But from the review we have taken, it will be seen that there is one feature in which that scheme transcends all His other works, at least as known to us; and that is, that it exhibits the original inherent relations of the three persons in the Godhead. We may not say that creation, or ordinary providence, presents *no* reflection of God as Triune, for Son and Spirit are both represented as concerned in the production even of the material universe; but we may say that it is extremely little we could learn from them of tri-personality in Jehovah; and certainly all we know of the original internal relations of the members of the Godhead is by means of their operations externally in the work of our redemption. All the arrangements of the covenant exhibit in luminous array the being

and operation of three divine persons ; nay more, are actually based upon the eternal relations subsisting between them, doubtless with the special design of bodying forth to men the original glory of God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Hence, when the apostle, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, rising to the loftiest heights of thought and devotion, so constantly and in such elevated strains, exhibits the relation of the Triune Jehovah to our salvation, he proclaims, as the design of all, 'To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church' (as he had just shown, and as he again shows immediately after, the product of the infinite grace and distinctive energy of the three persons in the Godhead) 'the manifold wisdom of God,' as displayed in the combined operation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

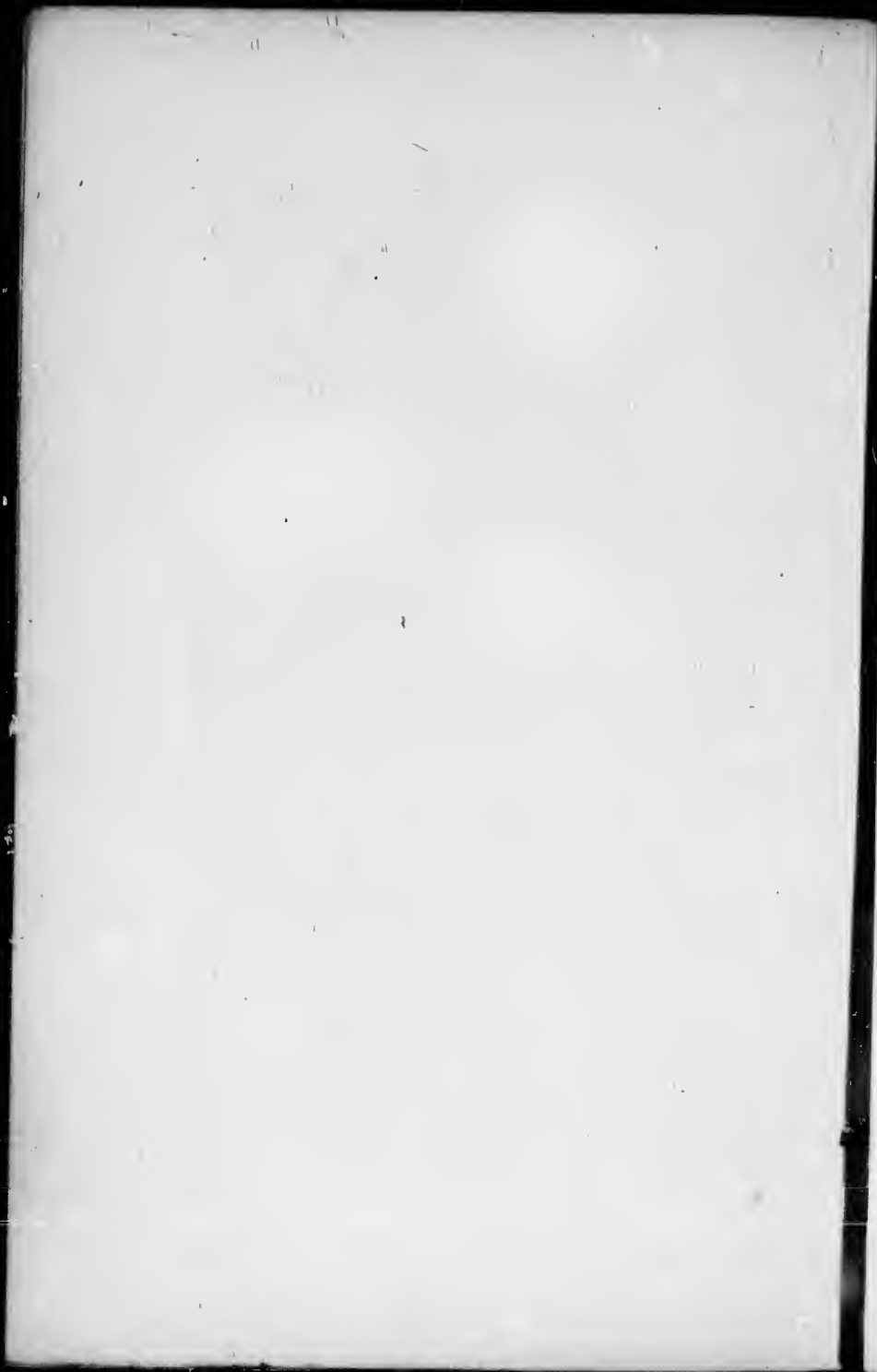
The redeemed Church will thus be 'a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty in the hands of her God.' In her shall be fulfilled the words, 'The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever ; the Lord shall rejoice in His works.' Not the Son alone sees of the labour of His soul and is satisfied. The Father rejoices over the son, once lost but now found, yea, as the shepherd rejoices over his one sheep more than over the ninety and nine that went not astray, and proclaims to His intelligent creation :

'Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth. But be ye glad and rejoice in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people.' And 'the good Spirit,' so long and so often 'grieved' with the impurity and opposition even of the regenerate, shall find fulness of joy in their completed holiness, exalted service, and overflowing happiness, of which He is the author. Having gathered in the great harvest of souls, the fruit of the blood and tears of the Son, both sower and reaper shall rejoice together. And thus, in the distinctive and peculiar, yet united, joys of each of the all-glorious Three, arising from the contemplation of the happiness and holiness of the redeemed Church,—from the manifestation of the divine glory through it to the intelligent creation, especially of the profound mysteries of the internal relations of the three members of the Godhead,—and from the blessed intercommunion of which salvation shall form the subject, the eternal undivided Godhead will find the eternal repose of infinite and ineffable satisfaction: 'He will rejoice over thee with joy; HE WILL REST IN HIS LOVE; He will joy over thee with singing.'

'What shall we say to these things?' Here truly we have reached a region 'dark with excessive

brightness.' Imagination becomes giddy on the height to which we have climbed; reason, vainly endeavouring to penetrate the dark profound on the verge of which we stand, hears, as it were, a voice from heaven, saying, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther;' and both recoil to grasp the hand of piety, and join their voices in the strains in which her emotions struggle for expression: 'O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.'

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.



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