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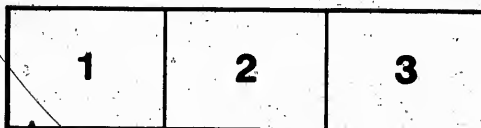
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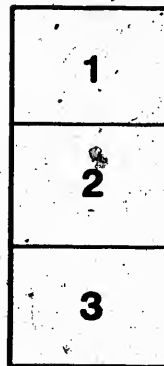
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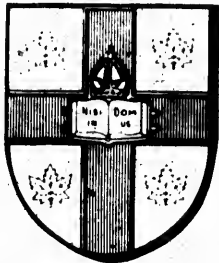


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A

# LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND

THE

LORD BISHOP OF FREDERICTON,

BY

THE REV. R. B. WIGGINS, A. M.

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SAINT JOHN :

PRINTED BY HENRY CHUBB & COMPANY,  
PRINCE WILLIAM STREET.

1851.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA  
GENERAL SYNOD, ARCHIVES



**General Synod**  
of the  
**Church of England**  
in Canada

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# LETTER.

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Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely, according to conscience, above all liberty.—MILTON.

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TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND  
THE LORD BISHOP OF FREDERICTON.

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My Lord,

WHEN I forwarded to you, for perusal, two volumes written by the late Rev. Mr. Clowes, of Manchester, England, I designed to test the question of *doctrines* therein contained. The previous controversy between the Rector of Trinity Church and myself did not touch the question. He confined himself to the consideration of Mr. Clowes' opinions connected with the dogmatic teaching of the Church, and declined altogether to discuss the subject on Scriptural authority. Your opinion, as expressed to me, is on the abstract ground of doctrine itself; and you declare, in this view of the subject, that Mr. Clowes denied the Trinity, the intercession of Christ, and the eleventh article of the Church of England!—The controversy with the Rector of Trinity Church, just alluded to, has done its work, and left its impress on the public mind, and the developments of the subject discussed will be more fully seen in due time. But the present letter is more important in its bearing, as requiring, from the very ground taken by yourself, not only an explanation of the doctrines of Mr. Clowes, but also a distinct recognition of the authority on which Mr. Clowes founded his views of these doctrines. There is a wise discretion, as to the time and opportunity, demanded of us, in enforcing the truths of the interior sense of the Word, and therefore this recognition has not been so distinctly called for before.

It is a grave charge that is now made by yourself, however, against a venerable Clergyman of the Church of England, who was sixty-two years Rector of a Parish, and who lived in the affections of his people, to say, on the abstract question, that he *denied* the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The charge is still more grave when it is known that, in reply to those who accused him of this heresy, in the beginning of his ministry, the Bishop, before whom he was arraigned, told his accusers to go and become like him whom they denounced. Neither the doctrine nor the man was found censurable by Bishop Porteus. But the Bishop himself might have been an heretic, by the

terms and definitions of the Church of England, and the question therefore arises, what is the doctrine held by Mr. Clowes, and sanctioned by the Bishop of the Diocese in which he was a Clergyman?

Mr. Clowes believed emphatically, as all do who receive the doctrines of the Word, as explained in the writings of Swedenborg, that the Lord is one, and indivisible, and that he who proceeds from another is not God: the Lord he is God. He taught distinctly from the word, that the Lord is the Creator, as well as the Redeemer; that He is the forgiver of sins, as well as the Being against whom they have been committed; and that He is the Word itself,—the Word which was in the beginning, the Word who spake to the prophets, and the Word which was manifested in the flesh.

He taught, moreover, that the Lord is man, very man; that He is the Divine man, that He is a person, and that He was always human in potency, though not in actuality; that in assuming our nature He became the Lord in *ultimates*, as he was in first principles; that the first became the last, the Alpha became the Omega, and centred in himself, by incarnation, all created things, till his body, from being a created, actually became the Divine substance, through the power of the indwelling Deity. In thus descending through the heavens, He who was above the heavens, clothed Himself successively with their embodiments, till He touched the very earth; and then, while of a nature infirm and human, became subject to all the grievous temptations from the hells, and by subduing them on their own plane, reduced them to order, and made them subservient, while thus in subjugation, to the salvation of all who follow Him in the regeneration. Unity in the Lord is the idea clearly revealed in the Bible, and the Trinity in the Lord as *One Person* is confirmed from the letter of Scripture by the spiritual sense included in it, as are all the other doctrines taught in the writings of Swedenborg. This doctrine, as opposed to the dogmatic teaching of the day, will be seen in a stronger light by contrasting it with the contradictions which the tri-personal theory every where exhibits.

That the Lord is one in person and essence, and that the human form, or Son of God, is the *manifestation* of the Father, and is the form from which the Holy Spirit, or proceeding Divine, emanates, is clearly intelligible from the spiritual sense of Scripture, for the spiritual sense conjoins what the literal sense separates; and intercession, mediation, and terms of that import, have reference exclusively, in the spiritual sense, to the Divine and Human Natures in the Person of the God-Head. They are at-one, and hence the at-one-ment, or reconciliation, is now *possible* between the Lord and his fallen creatures, but otherwise not possible. These are at-one with Him by being regenerated, or by becoming a new creation, and thus the partakers of a new nature, in consequence of redemption from hell; and sins are therefore no longer imputed to them when sins no longer reign and rule in their hearts. Hence "God was in Christ atoning the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

Contrast this simple and obvious teaching of the Gospel with the theory that man has made for himself. By this theory there are

three separate Divine Beings, distinct in thought, though with the lips it is declared, at the same time, that there is but *one*. The Father claims justice; the Son satisfies this justice, and the result is a reconciliation through the medium of the third Person in the Trinity. To say nothing of *three being one God*, and yet each differing from the other, it is remarkable that the very qualities attributed to the Father are denied by this tri-personal theory of redemption. It is declared that the love of saving the human race originated with the Father, that the Son undertakes the work of salvation, and yet that when the work is done the Son needs to *intercede* with the Father, and even to present His bleeding wounds to move the Father to mercy! If the demands of *justice* are fully satisfied, where is the necessity for "intercession?" And if, indeed, the Father is just, how could He allow the most *innocent* being in the universe to suffer in order to satisfy that justice? This is to consider the Divine principle *out of* the Lord, when, nevertheless, it is in Him; and the perception of the Lord's *Divinity* perishes with this idea, for it makes two out of one! The doctrine is monstrous, and it has blighted and desolated the Christian Church. I am aware that the doctrine is mixed up with the emotional part of our nature, and from *this* cause alone it has been capable hitherto of being over-ruled by the Lord for good in the Church; but this emotional tendency is all towards the Saviour, while it becomes alienated from the Father, or God himself; and the consequence has been, to deny the Deity of the Lord, by considering Him a victim to appease a being who was *greater* than Himself, and *totally different* in his nature and attributes. So far as these doctrines are concerned, they are treated of, according to my humble ability, in two Sermons lately published with the view of covering the whole ground in the late controversy here; as to the facts developed in that controversy, they speak for themselves.

With regard to faith alone, the time has gone by when that doctrine might be defended, any more than the doctrines which gave rise to it. It has been often declared, since the Reformation, that the Church was to rise or fall by this doctrine, and she has *fallen* by it. This justification by faith *alone* is not a faith in the Lord as the Jehovah, and therefore cannot save the soul; for the Lord is present according to the perception that man has of the Lord; and if this perception is not that the Lord is the only Person of God, the Divine Being himself is not present in His omnipotence. *These* doctrines, as still taught by the Church, are falsifications of the Word, by substituting the apparent for the real truths of Scripture, in order to suit the depravity of human nature. The doctrine of "faith alone" is declared by the article before alluded to as being a most comfortable doctrine; but however comfortable it may appear in *this* world, it is doubtless instrumental in leading many to uneasiness and disquietude in the world to come!

The doctrines of Swedenborg, of which Mr. Clowes was the faithful expositor and exemplar, need yet to be fully known; and when known, no intelligent man will have the hardihood to controvert or deny them. Priestley was wilted to the earth by such an attempt, and

was compelled to be *silent* under the overwhelming nature of the evidences of Swedenborg's Divine mission. All who have since taken the same course have retired from the controversy with the same success. They have felt that though there may be enough apparent weakness in the system to invite attack, there is hidden strength enough to repel it. The truths there which appear helpless from their very innocence, will be found to exert an influence of which the mightiest may be well afraid. Their claims are not the claims of a sect, but of a new dispensation. They are truths descending from God out of Heaven, and accompanied by the living voice of the Lord — *Behold I make all things new.*

Hitherto it has been argument enough to meet the claims of Swedenborg with ridicule; but such an argument is no longer available in the world, and consequently the world has given it up. The people who hold these views lately had a convention in London, and the proceedings were reported by the leading morning journals, as proceedings not to be despised. The New Church was represented at that meeting by an order of intelligence not inferior to any in England, and by distinguished individuals from Germany, Sweden, France, Spain, and the United States; while communications were received even from the Indian Empire. Each of these countries is a centre, from which rays are beginning to diverge in all directions, while the light of the new Jerusalem will mingle with and temper the discordant elements of a world in ruins. This Church has no retrograde motion; its truths never die out, in minds where they have once fairly lodged; they are as imperishable as the source from whence they come. After struggling against conflicting elements for nearly a century, these truths are now taking a position and holding a tone of language, which they who know them best are the least willing to question or to oppose. And as if to support these claims, and as an evidence to *some* minds of their reality, the philosophical writings of Swedenborg are now in course of translation from the original Latin. In these writings are contained all the principles of natural science; and the critical journals of the day have already begun to accord their testimony to the wonderful truths therein developed. They are truths of the most profound nature, acquired by the deepest research and most exact science, supported by the severest induction, and are confirmed and established by a system of the most merciless dialectics.

But I have not to do at present with the philosophical but the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. The former, indeed, are evidences of what the human faculties may perform, when trained to the pursuits of natural science; but the latter are evidences of the same highly trained faculties, acting under the influence of Divine illumination. The one was preparatory to the other in the order of Providence; but these departments of knowledge are separated from each other by distinct degrees in the human mind. It is not competent for the natural to ascend to the spiritual degree, though all things, on the natural plane, are confirmed and established by the higher evidences of Divine illumination.

That *such* an illumination is necessary for the full understanding of the spiritual sense of the Word, is evident from the very nature of the Word itself. The Word, in the letter, is the distinct embodiment of the Mind of God to fallen beings, and the tendency and design of the spiritual sense can be seen only by ascending to the spiritual plane. Naturally, man can form no distinct conception of the Divine Being; he has no organs to discern God as He is, but the very organs themselves have to be formed by which he may attain to correct ideas of the Deity. This must be so from the very nature of things. In departing from God man lost the actual knowledge of God, and his knowledge of God thence became relative, not actual. He had, therefore, no positive knowledge of *who* God is; and in the absence of such knowledge he necessarily considered God to be such an one as himself. Hence his idea of God in all ages has been the mere outbirth, or reflex, of his own mind, and he sees this Image, as it were, in huge lineaments on the sky. The *mere* letter of the Word tends only to modify this Image, not to deface it; and hence the Christian Church, as well as the Gentiles, have devised gods of their own. The Heathen have gods according to their characteristic thoughts and feelings. Even the Jews worshipped, for a time, their own mental creations; and when driven to the distinct acknowledgment of *one* God, they still clothed Him with their own arbitrary and vindictive passions. The Christian Church has divided the same idea into three—thus dividing the essence of the Lord—and confirmed this creed by the letter of the Word; and from this *appearance* of truth, instead of the truth itself, they have projected a theory which denies the very attributes of God, and renders Him, like themselves, placable to His friends, and wrathful to His enemies.

In this state of things a new dispensation became necessary. The letter of the word was no longer available as a guide to the human mind; and the spiritual sense was disclosed through the medium of Emanuel Swedenborg. He was prepared by the Lord for that purpose from his very infancy; and the evidences of his mission are to be found in the works he published under the Divine guidance. These works are attested by miracles of the highest order, and such as leave the human mind no escape, but by ignoring the very faculties themselves which God has given to man. These miracles are not evidenced by letters of fire on the sky, or by the suspension of the laws of nature, so called, or by any thing compulsory upon the mere bodily senses; but by evidences which address themselves to the interior perceptions of man, and demand a tacit assent to their Divine origin. These evidences begin in the higher regions of the mind, and are felt to be from a Divine source. They are not merely the thunderings and lightnings at the foot of the mount, addressed merely to the sensual mind, and *compelling* assent to the external law, but the lambent flame of heavenly love from which the law proceeds, and the tone of heavenly wisdom by which it is directed.

These are indeed high claims as an expositor to be put forth by a human being, but they are no less true than exalted, and demand the unqualified submission of sound reason and common sense. These

writings give a perfect exposition of the Word of God, and afford an infallible principle of interpretation, or *exegesis*, by which each passage of Scripture is seen in its own light, and all in the light of Heaven. The spirit is revealed through the letter, and every truth is subject to the spiritual test. There is no escape from their conclusions; the reasoning is irresistible, and the honest mind yields its ready assent to these laws of Scriptural interpretation.

This is strong language, you may say; but it is not so strong as the subject requires, because the evidences are higher than may be contained in any mere expressions of human thought. What do you think of a principle of interpretation which shall explain every chapter and verse in the Word of God by one uniform rule—which shall read out to you, for instance, in plain and intelligible language, the meaning of each and every syllable in the first ten chapters of Genesis, and make the Apocalypse itself translucent from a Divine source—that book which is *else* darker than the midnight sky? The difference between the expositions of Swedenborg and that of the reigning Church is as the difference between the eagle flying in the air and the serpent crawling upon the ground.

Do you ask *how* the word is explained? I answer, by the use of that language in which it was first written, and the knowledge of which was suffered to lapse in the order of Divine Providence, but is now again restored, through a messenger chosen by the Lord for that purpose. This language is literally Divine; it is the expression of the Divine Mind from all eternity, and was read and understood by men before books and letters were the medium of thought and affection. It is the language written all over the face of creation, where every object is the expression of a Divine thought and of a Divine emotion. This book of natural things contains all possible knowledge, to those who have learned to read; its letters are the indefinite things of all creation, and their combinations are infinite.

Originally this was the *only* Word of God, and it was read fluently and at sight, by the first race of men, called Adam. They had an instinctive perception of what each thing in Nature signified, or, in other words, what was its *name* or quality. Every object in creation, from the dust under their feet to the sun, moon, and stars over their heads, had a distinctive meaning; it was a *Word* of God, and had its application to some thought or emotion of the human mind; there was a correspondence between the external and the internal man, and the whole mind was effigied or imaged in the visible creation. The Creation, therefore, represented man; and hence he was called the Microcosm, or the universe in miniature, because he partook, as it were, of all its parts.

When man departed from innocence, *this* intuitive perception of the name or quality of things was lost, by degrees, as he descended lower and lower in the scale of being, till he finally sunk into that grossness of the senses which prompted him to worship the objects of Nature themselves, instead of considering them as the representatives of heavenly things. At this period the Word was *written*, and the created word was transcribed into the written word; and though embracing a continuous history, it was *so* written, that all things

therein expressed from the natural creation should correspond to things spiritual and Divine. By this doctrine of correspondences there is a spirit within the letter—an internal to which the external corresponds, and by which the Word is one continuous and unbroken series of Divine communications addressed to the internal man. What is obscure is thus made translucent from a Divine source, and all apparent contradictions vanish away at once. Hence the Creation becomes alive again; it is seen as the *present* work of the Lord, and utters its innumerable voices to the living soul of man. The letter still remains, in all its power, for the natural man; and he is still led by it, profitably, when no higher sense can be discerned. This letter of the Word is holy in every part, and inspired as to every jot and tittle; but its inspiration is plenary or full, because it contains what is holy within it, and conveys in the spirit, or its higher sense, the expression of the Divine Mind to the man who is progressing in the work of regeneration. "*It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*" According to this internal sense, the Word is now made to speak a language which is clear and intelligible to all who are willing to learn and obey it. By the Divine mercy of the Lord, the *spirit and life* of this Word are disclosed to the world on subjects hitherto hidden from the mind of man, such as the nature of the resurrection of the body, of the day of judgment, of the destruction of this earth by fire, and of the rewards and punishments of Heaven and Hell.

Nor are the disclosures of Swedenborg confined to an exposition of the Word, wonderful as those disclosures are; but they are confirmed and illustrated by revelations from the spiritual world itself, or by things actually seen and heard in the intermediate state, and in Heaven and Hell! These are established by a weight of evidence, from reason and analogy, which makes it more difficult to doubt them than to believe them, considered on the authority of their character as relations merely; and these, taken together with the doctrines he illustrates, leave no want or craving of the human mind unsatisfied: the system, as a whole, is full, perfect, and complete—"totus, teres atque rotundus." This was a subject on which the human mind required definite and exact teaching, and which, in the present state of the world, could no longer be left in doubt or obscurity. Hence the Lord has fully disclosed these things; and it must be evident to all who read these disclosures that nothing less than such relations from the spiritual world can now suffice to influence the hearts of men. The dogmatic teaching of the day has destroyed all sensibility to impression on this subject, and the power to influence the mind on the *realities* of Heaven and Hell is gone. The veil, which concealed the future from the present world, is therefore uplifted; and men may see, in the writings of Swedenborg, their future lot written out in living characters—a destiny which is neither arbitrary nor compulsory, but the natural and obvious result of laws which they have voluntarily chosen to obey, for good or evil, while upon earth. These disclosures, as they are read, are known to be true by higher evidence than belongs to the



mere narration of another who has seen and heard; they are *felt* to be true by an internal dictate—"a voice louder than seven thunders"—by the voice of conscience, the voice of God.

You are, therefore, called upon, my Lord, to consult the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. You are called upon by one who has deeply studied these writings himself, and who is anxious, from a deep sense of their inestimable value, that others should become acquainted with them too, and especially that those should become acquainted with them who stand in the responsible situation of religious teachers. It is but one voice, indeed, that calls upon you in this letter, but it is the voice of one thoroughly in earnest, of one among thousands who have imbibed these truths, who know *what* they believe; and who are prepared to defend them against the world. But you will soon be called upon by *other* voices than mine—you and *all* the professed ministers of truth will be called upon to show some cause why you reject, or neglect to examine, or to confute, if you *can*, the testimony of a person who was accredited from Heaven to unfold the spiritual sense of the Scriptures, and to reveal in detail the momentous realities of Heaven and Hell. You will be called upon, I mean, by those who deny the Word itself—you will be called upon by *them* to explain its whole meaning, to reconcile its apparent contradictions in the letter, and to account for its conflicting evidence against *the discoveries of modern science*. These things you cannot do; and yet these are stern requisitions, and they *must* be met and answered, or the infidel will boldly meet you on your own ground, and vanquish you by the very weapons that he has wrested out of your own hands.

The truth is, my Lord, that the first Christian Church, as a dispensation, has come to its end. It is now the consummation of the age, translated (erroneously, as you are aware,) *the end of the world*, as predicted in Matthew xxiv. 3; and a new dispensation is arising out of the old, and which is destined to change the face of the earth, or the state of the moral world. This is expressed as the *coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of Heaven*, or as the disclosure of the spiritual sense of the word, the light, (John xii. 34, 36,) through the clouds of the letter which obscure it. Hence the coming of the Son of Man, or the light of Divine truth, is with *the power and great glory* of the interior and hidden senses of the word. This dispensation is the crowning dispensation of all others; it is the New Heaven and the New Earth which are to remain; it is the New Church which is to grow and thrive, while the old is to pass for ever away. The present theological systems are like the exuvia, or cast-off clothing, which are no longer serviceable to the Christian world. The existing, or recognised Church, is consummated, or brought to its end; and this is beginning to be felt by many anxious and thoughtful minds, enquiring more or less ardently, *where* is the Church? The Church that *they* ask for has already ceased to be, and what of good is apparently there still, is not of the old Church, but of the new. The old Church, as a Church, has been destroyed by man; and what man has once destroyed *man* never can restore, and the Lord never *does*. He does not *re-build*, but He brings what

is *new* out of the old; and at the close of any dispensation He institutes an order of things which *gradually and silently* takes the place of that which is passing away. The cause of the Lord is onward; He makes all things new, because He can do all things, and knows all things; but the power of man can only demolish, while the voice of man, from mere defect of knowledge, is compelled to be dumb, or to utter only retrospective words.

The present parties in the Church, my Lord, are doing this work of demolition, and they are doing it with all their might; they are not leaving one stone upon another in the Spiritual Church which they are not throwing down. This is in the order of Divine Providence, and they are pulling down as fast as the Lord's New Church is prepared to build up. There is neither force nor violence in this necessary work of demolition, but all things are done according to known laws, and in accordance with human freedom. The Lord bends, but never breaks, the freedom of the human will; and while men are contending for their distinctive creeds and systems, each party, by a gradual and silent process, is undermining the other. This work of disintegration is silently going on, and the work is seen *now*, not so much by a conflict of sects against each other, as by internal strife and discord among themselves. This is the daily complaint in the Church of England, as you are aware; for her members are at issue on the essential principles contained in their very creeds, and the *toleration* of one party by the other is not even dreamed of. It is war—a bitter, ceaseless hostility—evidenced among us by everything subtle and malignant: Their dogmatic teaching needs to be reviewed, and their present party strife and personal animosity to be hushed to rest, by the voice of doctrines which will tell upon the temper, habits, and dispositions of men. But these very doctrines are rejected by the Church, and all parties, as such, in the Church make *common* cause against them, and hence the desolation of the Church. With the reigning system of religion there is no hope for the world; the Church, so called, is fast losing its power to control the thoughts and affections of men; and a new order of truth is required, adapted to the state of the public mind, as the precursor and harbinger of that glorious era which is even now dawning upon the world, and which in the Lord's good time will change the whole structure of human society.

With this view it becomes the paramount duty of all who possess the truth to declare it for the good of others. Let each man speak out what truth is in him, and in this way offer a plain refutation of false doctrines. Truth must be supported, at any rate; and while the reigning Church persecutes and opposes those who do so, that Church is only *completing* her final consummation. The life she still has is the result only of what truth she yet possesses; and this life is feeble and dying, because much of this truth is only *apparent* truth, and the residue is mixed with the false that arises from *ignorance*, and which, on that account, the Lord can overrule for good. Hence many persons in that Church are better than their creeds, and live *above* the system which they ignorantly think is better than themselves. They do not see that their creeds and systems, though

containing the apparent truth, and thence held by many conscientious persons, are still really unscriptural, as *now* taught, and to be rejected accordingly; and that the present dogmatic teaching leads of necessity to unbelief and sin, and consequently to the final ruin of the soul. How can mere thought, or the mental process, on the one hand, save the soul—the doctrine of faith *alone*? Or, on the other, how can the mere ordinances be rendered efficacious to land a man in Heaven, as it were, by extreme unction? These two systems contain the *all* of the Church, and these have *parted the garments of the Lord* between them! But they cannot *rend His vesture*; they cannot destroy the *spiritual sense* of the word, however they may divide the literal senses, so as to lead to all kinds of conflict and denial of the word itself. The vesture, or internal, is *one*; it is *without seam, woven from the top throughout*.

*Unity* in the Church is an impossibility any longer, because the Lord is denied, *i. e.* the oneness of His person, and hence the spiritual sense of His Word, which is one also. The first Christian Church was to fall by degrees, as predicted, and as described in the Apocalypse as to its particular states of declension. This Church was to be replaced by a new one, when men were able to comprehend and accept the sole and supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ. "At that day ye shall ask in my name, and no more in the name of the Father." The first Christian Church could not believe that He alone was the Jehovah; and if this truth had been enforced upon them, it is evident that Christianity could not have been sustained, since this truth is widely denied in the Church, even at this day. In order to save Christianity, and to prevent the denial of God, the Church, therefore, admitted three persons into the Trinity, when no such *expression* is found in the Scriptures! From that Nicene Council is dated the fall of the first Christian Church; and the Reformers admitted *this* fact, when they denied the authority of human councils to impose creeds and to enforce belief. This was called Protestantism—the protest against all human tradition and human authority; and its only bond of union now is an opposition to the Papacy from which it revolted. Left to itself, Protestantism is falling to pieces, and will be divided into as many sects as there are persons, when there are no longer Papists or Puseyites to oppose. Protestantism claims the right of *private* judgment; and when they who have been accustomed to think from the authority of others begin to think each for himself, there will result a confusion and contradiction of opinions which will be faintly imaged by the language of Babel, and which will call for a new dispensation of the Gospel, as the sole refuge from a mere chaos of human thought. Then the *dry land* will appear, and the first signs of vegetable life will give evidence of the New Heaven and of the New Earth, which are destined to *remain*, as the crowning dispensation of all that have gone before: (Isaiah lxx. 17 to the end, and lxxvi. 22.)

I am, yours very truly,

**R. B. WIGGINS.**

St. John. N. B., Nov. 15, 1851.

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