

Technical and Bibliographic Notes / Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for scanning. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of scanning are checked below.

- Coloured covers /
Couverture de couleur
- Covers damaged /
Couverture endommagée
- Covers restored and/or laminated /
Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- Cover title missing /
Le titre de couverture manque
- Coloured maps /
Cartes géographiques en couleur
- Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black) /
Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- Coloured plates and/or illustrations /
Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- Bound with other material /
Relié avec d'autres documents
- Only edition available /
Seule édition disponible
- Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion
along interior margin / La reliure serrée peut
causer de l'ombre ou de la distorsion le long de la
marge intérieure.

- Additional comments /
Commentaires supplémentaires:

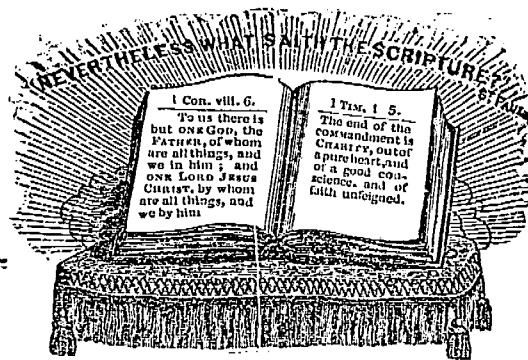
L'Institut a numérisé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de numérisation sont indiqués ci-dessous.

- Coloured pages / Pages de couleur
- Pages damaged / Pages endommagées
- Pages restored and/or laminated /
Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/
Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- Pages detached / Pages détachées
- Showthrough / Transparence
- Quality of print varies /
Qualité inégale de l'impression

- Includes supplementary materials /
Comprend du matériel supplémentaire

- Blank leaves added during restorations may
appear within the text. Whenever possible, these
have been omitted from scanning / Il se peut que
certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une
restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais,
lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas
été numérisées.

THE BIBLE



CHRISTIAN.

TRUTH, HOLINESS,

LIBERTY, LOVE.

VOL. III.

MONTREAL, MAY, 1846.

No. 5.

The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, MAY, 1846.

UNITARIANISM IN MONTREAL.

Unitarianism has for some time past occupied a much larger share of public attention in this city, than ever it did at any prior period. How it succeeded in obtaining such extensive notoriety we could not undertake positively to say. We should be sorry to take the merit of the matter wholly to ourselves. Were we to do so, we should be open to a charge of vanity and self-importance similar to that so justly alleged in the fable against the fly, which, whilst sitting on the centre of the carriage wheel in motion, took to itself the credit of all that was performed by the wheel.

We are willing to concede to our Orthodox friends the credit of bringing Unitarianism so prominently into notice. Yet to the Unitarians themselves, we suppose, must be given a share of the merit in the first instance. Had they not been in the city, or had they not taken means to give those who were anxious to hear, a knowledge of the Unitarian belief and the grounds of it, Unitarianism might still have remained in comparative obscurity in Montreal. Our worshipping Society is but of recent origin. It was not until within the past year that we had a church edifice in which to meet for worship. Availing himself of the accommodation it afforded, the Unitarian Minister commenced a course of lectures in January last, the object of which was to enter into a brief exposition of religion from its very foundation, and proceed regularly to the development of the teaching of the Scriptures on some of the more prominent points of faith. These lectures were well attended, and aroused many persons to inquire concerning religion who had hitherto paid but little attention to that subject.

Before the course of lectures in the Unitarian Church was concluded, it was found that many of the Orthodox pulpits in the city had taken occasion to argue against and denounce the alleged errors of Unitarianism. Of this we do not complain. If Unitarianism be erroneous, the sooner it is argued down the better. We hope, however, that a proper distinction will always be made between sound argument, and mere invective, or ardent appeals to the feelings. So much were our Orthodox neighbours aroused by their pulpits, that the Unitarians were met on every hand—in the market, in the street, and in the private circle—and informed how dangerous a system Unitarianism was, and how effectually it had been exposed and refuted in their church some Sunday or two before.

It was frequently found, however, that the persons who thus spoke of Unitarianism knew very little about it. Either their pulpits had given them imperfect and erroneous ideas on the matter, or they had misunderstood the information given. Under these circumstances, the Committee of the Montreal Unitarian Society thought it necessary to adopt some means to keep the public mind right on the subject, by imparting proper information concerning our views and the grounds of them. To this end, they compiled a tract, which, they printed on a

sheet the same size as this paper, and published, under the common title of a "Tract for the Times."

That our readers at a distance may have an idea of the amount of attention lately bestowed upon Unitarianism in this city, we may state, that during the past month no fewer than three pulpits have been delivering lectures by special announcement against our views, and that no fewer than three religious newspapers have been engaged in writing against them. Nor is this all: for we are assured by one of the religious journals that "in almost all the evangelical churches discourses have been delivered" to the same effect. Nor is the whole stated yet. Even strange clergymen visiting this city have been pressed into the same service; and some of the commercial journals, as if anxious to become polemics as well as politicians, have shewn themselves ready to pronounce judgment upon "Unitarian errors."

The facts above stated will account for the appearance of the unusually large quantity of controversial matter contained in our present sheet. The demand upon our own pen has been considerable, and we have endeavoured to answer it as well as we could amidst a variety of other necessary engagements. So long as the curiosity of the public concerning our views is stimulated by the Orthodox pulpit and the Orthodox press, we will consider it our duty to gratify it.

Seriously speaking, we think our Orthodox brethren have given us more importance than we deserve. The Unitarians are but an inconsiderable body in this city. Individually, we have watched the excitement without being much moved one way or the other. While we have had no fears whatever for the cause of Unitarianism, we have not allowed our hopes to be very sanguine for its immediate success to any remarkable extent. It would be contrary to all experience, however, if the result of such an agitation, did it not prove favourable to the Unitarian cause. And it is only proper to state, that so far it has proved favourable to our cause in Montreal. A marked augmentation has already taken place in our worshipping Society. Many who came to our church out of mere curiosity, from having heard our views denounced, remained to be convinced of their truth. Some there are amongst us who freely acknowledge that having "come to scold, they remained to pray."

* The following editorial paragraph appeared in the *Montreal Herald* of April 25th:—

"We are requested to intimate that the Rev. Nathaniel Willis, D.D. of Kenfield street Church, Glasgow, will preach to-morrow (Sunday), in the Free Church, Cote Street, as follows:—Abernoon (Military Service), half-past 1 p. m.; Evening, 7 p. m."

"We understand that Dr. Willis has also agreed to give a discourse on the Divinity of Christ, in opposition to Unitarian errors, in St. Gabriel Street Church, on Wednesday evening, at 7 o'clock. From the well known character of Dr. Willis as an able Theologian, and from his former experience as a Theological Professor in Scotland, it is confidently anticipated that the Doctor will do ample justice to this deeply important subject."

Now if our contemporary, the *Herald*, had simply said DOCTRINES instead of ERRORS, there would be nothing objectionable in the above paragraph. When there are three religious journals in Montreal on the orthodox side, and two of them good-sized weekly papers, and nothing on the heterodox side but our own very small and unpretending sheet making its appearance monthly, there is surely no occasion for the secular press to turn polemical. The religious prints have evidently the will, and no doubt they think they have the power, to put down Unitarianism.—Under all the circumstances, we hope our neighbours of the daily broad-sheet will see the propriety of abstaining from interference. They are powerful, we know; and we hope they will be generous.

BRIEF STATEMENT OF REASONS For Declining to receive THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

The belief in a tri-personal Deity is a fundamental point in the popular theology. As faith in a God, or great First Cause, must lie at the bottom of all religion, so a faith in the threefold nature of the Supreme Being may be regarded as the basis of what is conventionally termed Orthodox Christianity. According to that system, each of the three alleged "persons" of the Godhead has an appropriate and peculiar function to fulfil in relation to man.

Now this distribution of the Supreme Being into three "persons," "hypostases," "substences," or "somewhats," (as they have been variously designated by Trinitarian theologians,) is declined by a large and constantly increasing class of Christian believers. These maintain that the one God who is acknowledged by all Christians, is personally one—one in the proper and absolute sense of that term—undivided and indivisible. Thus, while the bulk of the Christian world believe in God's threefold nature, or the *Trinity in Unity*, this class of believers hold to the doctrine of God's uncompounded nature, or *simple Unity*. Designated with reference to their ideas of the Godhead, the former should, in strictness of language, be called *Trinitarian-Unitarians*, or, as believers in a Triune God, *Tri-Unitarians*; while the latter should be named simply, *Unitarians*. But, for the sake of convenience, it has been adopted as a custom to style the former *Trinitarians* simply, their belief in God's unity in the sense they put upon it, being all the while understood. It is likewise usual to style the latter *Unitarians* simply, always meaning by that term those who maintain the strict unity of the Supreme Being.

Both classes are Christian believers, though in different senses. Both classes maintain that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour of men, the Lord and Lawgiver of the Christian Church, the Mediator between God and man. But on each of these terms they respectively put different constructions.—The Trinitarian conceives that the term "Son of God" is to be understood as conveying the idea of a strict identity of essence or nature with God, so that Christ is on a perfect equality with the Supreme Being, or in fact the Supreme Being himself. He considers that the term "Son of God" has an equivalent or synonyme in "God the Son." The Unitarian, on the other hand, conceives that the term "Son of God" denotes a being distinct from that God whose Son he is, proceeding from him, and therefore posterior to him in point of time, and subordinate to him in point of rank.—The Trinitarian conceives that Christ was the Saviour of men by virtue of his Supreme Deity, in consequence of which he was enabled to offer an infinite sacrifice on the cross, to expiate the sins of mankind. The Unitarian, on the other hand, conceives that Christ was the Saviour of men by virtue of his office as a Teacher of divine truth, by the sinless and perfect example he set before us, by the profoundly interesting spectacle of his death upon the cross, endured on account of our sins, and by which the heart should be moved to reverence, repentance, obedience and love. Unitarians generally consider that Jesus is the Saviour of men by establishing a system of motives, means, and influences, to act upon the human mind and heart, to turn man from sin, and thus save him from the consequences of sin, to bring him into the way of holiness here, and thus, through the great mercy of God, secure him a heaven of happiness hereafter.—The Trinitarian conceives that Christ is Lord and Lawgiver of the Christian Church by virtue of his own inherent and underived authority. The Unitarian, on the other hand, conceives that Christ is Lord and Lawgiver of the Christian Church in consequence of the power and commandment he received from his Father. He conceives that 'God made Jesus both Lord and Christ.'—The Trinitarian conceives that Christ is Mediator between God

and men; but that his office and individuality as such are to be regarded as distinct from his alleged Supreme Deity. Hence he speaks of his mediatorial character and capacity as something different and distinguishable from that superior nature which he assigns to him. The Unitarian, on the other hand, recognizes no such distinction of two natures in Christ. As he believes God to be one uncompounded Being, so likewise he believes Christ to be one uncompounded Being. He regards Christ as the Mediator between God and men, because God raised him up as a Divine Messenger, and qualified him by extraordinary gifts to perform an important work for humanity. According to the Unitarian view, God and man were at variance. God had compassion for the world, and wished man to become reconciled to him. Christ was the medium through which God put himself in communication with man. Through him, as the Mediator, came all the spiritual blessings to the human race; and through him again, as the Mediator, are all offerings of praise and prayer to ascend from man to God.—Both parties, then, receive Christ as he is offered to them in the Gospel, but they put different constructions on the terms found there in connection with him. By thus receiving Christ in sincerity, and to the best of their knowledge, as he is revealed to them, they become his professed disciples. In addition, then, to the names already given to them on account of their belief in a God, and their particular views of the Godhead, we attach the name *Christian* to them. The Trinitarian becomes a *Trinitarian Christian*; the Unitarian, a *Unitarian Christian*. As to which party is right in its interpretation of the Scripture, that is just the point in controversy.

Ever since the period of its first authoritative promulgation by the Council of Constantinople, in A.D. 381, the doctrine of the Trinity has had a powerful and extensive hold upon the mind of Christendom. The awfully rigorous measures of the Emperor Theodosius effectually checked the discussion of the question, and paved the way for the complete triumph of the Trinitarian doctrine.* The strong arm of imperial power severely exercised had given it a firm hold and secured its prevalence in the Church before the night of the Middle Ages set in upon the world. When this dark period came, the human mind was hushed in slumber, or engaged in speculations which were calculated to augment, rather than diminish, the errors which had already become incorporated with the simple doctrines of the Gospel. In the sixteenth century an open and successful revolt was made against the corruptions and abuses of the Church. It was not to be expected, however, that the reformers of that period could discover and set aside the accumulated errors of fifteen centuries. Their work was the first step towards a glorious consummation, and a giant stride it was. But they did not rise completely above the evil influence of their times. Those who narrowly escaped the faggot for denying the doctrine of Transubstantiation, could look without compunction on a brother reformer in the flames because he denied the doctrine of the Trinity. The fate of Servetus, and the part Calvin took in the affair, are well known matters of history. No doctrine was ever more favoured and aided by the strong iron arm of temporal power, than that of the Trinity. It is but little more than thirty years since the penal laws against those

* Here is a sample of the style in which Theodosius addressed the Arians, A.D. 383, two years after the Council of Constantinople:—"I will not permit throughout my dominions any other religion than that which obliges us to worship the Son of God in unity of essence with the Father and Holy Ghost in the adorable Trinity—ne hold the empire of Him; and the power which I have to command you, he likewise will give me strength, as he hath given me will, to make myself obeyed in a point so absolutely necessary to your salvation and to the peace of my subjects.—Waddington's *History of the Church*, p. 99.

"Theodosius considered every heretic [that is, every one who differed from himself] as a rebel against heaven and earth. . . . In the space of fifteen years, he promulgated at least fifteen severe edicts. . . . more especially against those who rejected the doctrine of the Trinity; and to deprive them of every hope of escape, he sternly enacted, that if any laws or decrees should be alleged in their favour, the judges should consider them as the illegal productions either of fraud or forgery."—*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. v. p. 31.

who ventured to deny it, were erased from the statute book of Great Britain.

It is no wonder, then, that it should be so extensively held and professed in the world at present. Nor should it be thought strange that those who set it aside are now greatly in the minority. The power and the fashion of the world, the interests and the prejudices of the multitude, have all been in its favour. In a community or country where the denial of this doctrine is a new thing, those who venture on such a course will be regarded with distrust. And this is natural enough. To all around, then, they appear as innovators on things most sacred. In this light all religious reformers have been viewed at first. If the community be of an intelligent and inquiring character, it will be ready to ask, and willing to hear, what reasons Unitarians have for departing from so prominent a point in the popular faith. Such a disposition is proper and praiseworthy. Presuming that there are many persons in this community of that stamp, we propose to offer a few reasons in justification of Unitarians for adopting the course they have taken.

There are several reasons which compel us to decline the triune theory of the Godhead, and adhere to the belief in the simple unity of the Deity. In our opinion, the argument from common sense is against the doctrine of the Trinity; the argument from sound reason is against it; the argument from plain Scripture is against it; the argument from ecclesiastical history is against it; and even from those who believe it, as well as from those who deny it, we derive argument against it. Let us briefly illustrate what we have now laid down.

1. *The argument from common sense is against it.* The following extract from the Athanasian creed may be taken as a statement of the doctrine: "The Father is Almighty; the Son, Almighty; and the Holy Ghost, Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties; but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord; the Son, Lord; and the Holy Ghost, Lord. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord." Now we say that common sense gives a verdict against every sentence of that statement. Here are three persons, each of whom is plainly affirmed to be God, and yet in the same breath we are told they are not three Gods, but one God. Common sense at once pronounces that if the former part be true, the latter cannot; and if the latter be true, the former cannot.

Or take the statement and explanation of the Westminster Confession: "In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son." Here again common sense gives a verdict against the assertion that a Son can be eternal as his own Father, or that the third person of the Trinity can be precisely coeval with those other persons from whom he is said to have proceeded.

2. *The argument from sound reason is against it.* Some may think it unnecessary to make this a matter of distinct statement; inasmuch as sound reason, it is said, always confirms the dictates of common sense. But under this head, we only intend to shew somewhat more minutely that the verdict of common sense is correct. The assertion that there are three persons, each of whom is Supreme God, and yet that there is only one Supreme God, at once confounds numbers and contradicts first principles, and therefore it cannot be true. If the term "person" have any intelligible meaning, it implies, at least, a distinct individual existence. Now to affirm that there are two or three such distinct individual existences, each and every one of whom is omnipotent, &c., is to assert a moral impossibility. And with respect to the co-eternity of the Son with the Father, this part of the theory is likewise at variance with reason and truth. Father and Son are correlative terms, necessarily involving the ideas of priority and posteriority in point of time. "The phrase *Eternal Son*," says Dr. Adam Clarke (himself a Trinitarian), "is a positive self-contradiction. *Eternity* is that which has had no beginning, nor stands in any reference to time. *Son* supposes time, generation, and father; and time also antecedent to such generation." An argument of the same nature lies against the "eternal procession" of the Holy Ghost, or third person of the Trinity.

We know it is said, however, that the whole is a mystery; and that a doctrine is not to be rejected merely because it is incomprehensible. In the latter opinion we fully agree. Many things are incomprehensible to us which are unquestionably

true. The union of the soul with the body is an incomprehensible matter to us, yet we should never think of denying it. The fact of such a union is unquestionable. To explain it is above our reason, but there is nothing in the statement of it to contradict our reason. But it is very different, as we have seen, in the statement of the Trinity. There is a line of distinction to be drawn between that which is above reason and that which is contrary to it. If we lose sight of this line, there can be no end to the absurdities which may be presented in the name of religion. Under the much-abused plea of mystery the Roman Catholic finds what he conceives a sufficient shelter for the doctrine of Transubstantiation. It should always be observed that the Unitarians do not reject the doctrine of the Trinity because it is incomprehensible, but because it is defective in rational and Scriptural proof.

3. *The argument from plain Scripture is against it.* Every reader of the Bible knows that the general tenor of that Sacred Book is in harmony with the declaration of Moses when he said, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." We read in the Bible that there is one God. We read likewise that "God is one." But it is nowhere stated that "God is three." And until such a statement is produced we do not see (and we say it with all respect) how Trinitarianism can be said to stand upon the same distinct and definite Scriptural ground as Unitarianism. Roman Catholic controversialists insist that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be proved from the Scriptures alone.* To the same effect speak the Tractarians of the Anglican Church.† These parties hold the Trinity, but they maintain that the authoritative tradition, or teaching of the Church is necessary, as well as the Scriptures, to establish it. The Unitarians likewise maintain that it is not sustained by the Bible, and, as they discard the authority of tradition, they discard the doctrine of the Trinity likewise. Thus it appears that although the doctrine of a Tri-personal God is the faith of the great multitude of Christian believers, yet it is at the same time maintained by the large majority that that doctrine cannot be legitimately drawn from the Scriptures alone. This consideration should surely have some weight with the careful enquirer.

The Trinitarian controversialist does not pretend to say that the doctrine in question is expressly revealed in the Bible. The most that is claimed for it, is, that it is a doctrine fairly deducible therefrom by a process of inferential reasoning.‡ But wherever human reason is employed, the element of fallibility is introduced, and its deductions should not be arrayed against the utterance of the infallible Word, when that utterance is plainly, distinctly, and incontrovertibly spoken. The Bible teaches that there is "one God." All who admit the teaching of the Bible acknowledge this truth. This is the unity of the Deity which is held by Unitarians and Trinitarians alike. But the Unitarians maintain that the "one God" acknowledged by both parties, is simply One—they hold his *simple unity*; and for this opinion, they quote a Scripture declaration—"God is one."§ The Trinitarians, on the other hand, are not satisfied with this doctrine of the simple unity—they hold a compound unity, called a *trinity in unity*. Now to make their ground as strong as that of the Unitarians they should be able to quote a Scripture declaration that "God is three." But they cannot do this. Their

* In a discussion held at Castlebar, Ireland, in January, 1837, between the Rev. Mr. Hughes, a Roman Catholic Priest, and the Rev. Mr. Stoney, Protestant Rector, the former gentleman thus expressed himself:—"I believe the doctrine of the Trinity on the authority of the Church; and though he (Mr. Stoney) rejects Church authority, he would be glad to base his creed upon a spire of it. My belief in the Trinity is based on the authority of the Church;—no other authority is sufficient."

† The following extract from the writings of the Oxford Doctors is worthy of attention in this connection:—"What shall we say when we consider that a case of doctrine, necessary doctrine, the very highest and most sacred,—may be produced where the argument lies as little on the surface of Scripture,—where the proof, though most conclusive, is as indirect and circuitous as that for Episcopacy, viz. the doctrine of the Trinity? Where is this solemn and comfortable mystery formally stated in Scripture, as we find it in the Creeds? Why is it not? Let a man consider whether all the objections which he urges against the scriptural argument for Episcopacy may not be turned against his own belief in the Trinity. It is a happy thing for themselves that men are inconsistent; yet it is miserable to advocate and establish a principle which, not in his own case indeed, but in the case of others who learn it, leads to Socinianism (meaning Unitarianism). A person who denies the apostolical succession of the ministry, because it is not clearly taught in the Scripture, ought, I conceive, if consistent, to deny the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, which is nowhere literally stated in Scripture. . . . If the Lord's Supper is never distinctly called a sacrifice, or Christian ministers are never called priests, still, let me ask, is the Holy Ghost ever expressly called God in Scripture? Nowhere. We infer it from what is said: we compare parallel passages."—*Tracts for the Times*, vol. 1, No. 45, vol. 5, No. 85, pp. 4, 11.

‡ A Trinitarian writer, the Rev. J. Carlile, in his work called *Jesus Christ the Great God our Saviour*, thus states the matter:—"The doctrine of the Trinity is rather a doctrine of inference and of indirect intimation, deduced from what is revealed respecting the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and intimated in the notices of a plurality of Persons in the Godhead, in the form of baptism and in some of the apostolic benedictions, than a doctrine directly and explicitly declared. We have now come to the limit of explicit revelation, and are entering upon the region of reasoning and inference."

peculiar doctrine of the Godhead stands, not on an express *Scripture testimony*, but on a process of *inferential reasoning*.

Even though their process of inferential reasoning could not be at once shown to be false, we should be obliged to reject its result when we discover its discrepancy with so plain a declaration of God's Word. But it can be shown to be false. This is not the place, however, to enter on a discussion of such a nature. Our aim in these remarks is only to submit a few reasons in justification of Unitarians for departing from the popular doctrine of a triune Deity. The Trinitarians are very apt to speak of the Unitarians as relying too much on human reason. Such a charge whenever made, is improper, and unjust, and might be forcibly retorted. The doctrine of the Unitarian rests directly on Scripture, and can be stated in the very *language of Scripture*. The doctrine of the Trinitarian cannot be so stated. It is constructed by an exercise of human reason, and can only be stated in the *language of human creeds*. Their conduct in this respect seems to us very inconsistent and extraordinary. To borrow the words of a late distinguished convert from the Trinitarian to the Unitarian faith, "they first construct the doctrine upon inference and human reason, and then prostrate reason to receive it."

The only text in the Bible where the three terms, Father, Word (or Son), and Holy Spirit, are mentioned together and called one, is 1st John, v. 7: "For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one." But what man who values his character as a Biblical scholar would say that this text is genuine Scripture? That it is an interpolation is now admitted by eminent critics of every denomination. Yet it was clung to as a proof for the Trinity, by many parties, long after the critical evidence had spoken decisively against its genuineness.* And even yet it is offered as the first proof-text for that doctrine in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The Scriptures plainly teach God's simple unity. The Deity is always spoken of as one. He is never styled three. Our Saviour repeats the declaration of Moses already referred to, as the first of all the commandments. "Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord."† "In that day," saith the Prophet, "there shall be one Lord, and his name One."‡ Elsewhere in the Prophecies he is styled "the Mighty One,"§ "the High and Lofly One,"|| &c. And the Apostle Paul not only says that there is one God, but he writes expressly that "God is One."¶ The general tenor of Scripture is in harmony with the texts cited. From all which it appears not only that there is "one God," but that that one God is One—one simply and indivisibly. The Unitarian and the Trinitarian alike believe that there is "one God." But while the latter affirms that in "the unity of the Godhead there be three persons,"** the former maintains that in the unity of the Godhead there is only one person—he affirms that "God is one."†† Following up his affirmation respecting the three persons in the Deity, the Trinitarian asserts that "the Father is God, the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God."‡‡ While the Unitarian on the other hand following up his affirmation respecting the one person only in the Deity asserts that the "Father" is the "only true God."§§ Thus distinct and different do their statements stand concerning the doctrine of the Godhead. The Unitarian can state his faith in the very language of the sacred Scripture. But the Trinitarian is compelled to resort to the language of human creeds and confessions.

4. *The argument from Ecclesiastical history is against it.* It is worthy of remark that the Jewish people never held the doctrine of a threefold God. We know that during a long course of centuries their nation was the depository of the records of divine revelation. Inspired prophets and teachers were raised up amongst them, time after time, but none of these ever taught the doctrine of the Trinity. Nor did our Saviour and his apostles ever teach such a doctrine. If we had one enunciation from them that "there are three persons in the one God" the question would be set at rest. In the first ages of the church there was no such distribution of persons in the Deity, known to Christians. For three centuries after the death of our Lord, the Apostles' Creed was the only publicly recognized symbol of

* "We have some wranglers in theology," says the eminent Bishop Lenth, "sworn to follow their master, who are prepared to defend any thing, however absurd, should there be occasion. But I believe there is no one among us in the least degree conversant with sacred criticism, and having the use of his understanding, who would be willing to contend for the genuineness of the verse, 1 John v. 7."

† Mark xii. 29. ‡ Zech. xiv. 9. § Isa. i. 24. || Isa. lvii. 15. ¶ Westminster Confession, chap. iii. § 3. †† St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, chap. iii. v. 20. ‡‡ Athanasian Creed. §§ Christ's Prayer,—John xvii. 1, 2.

faith. Now the Apostles' Creed is essentially Unitarian in doctrine, and the fact that it was the only creed known during those first ages of the church, clearly shows us that the Christians of those times were believers in the simple unity of God.

Since neither the Jewish people nor the first Christians knew the doctrine of the Trinity, whence then, it may be asked, did it come? We reply, that it can be traced to its origin in the refined speculations of the Gentile philosophy. Plato the celebrated Athenian sage who flourished about 360 years before Christ, taught the doctrine of one great first Cause. And, according to the interpretation put upon his writings by his disciples, he likewise taught that in the divine nature there were three 'principles' or 'hypostases' which he termed *To Agathon*, the Supreme Good; *Logos* or *Nous*, the mind or reason of God proceeding from the former principle, and *Psyche*, or soul. According to the Platonic philosophy these three, taken together, constituted the one Divinity.

Such was the fashionable philosophy at Alexandria when the simple doctrines of the Gospel found their way to that great city. Here Christianity came in contact with it and was corrupted by it. The divine religion which our Saviour taught, was too simple for men who had always been accustomed to refined and abstruse speculations. As christianity found its way among the learned they engrafted upon it some of their favorite philosophic notions. The three-fold division of the Deity was a prominent doctrine of the reigning philosophy, and this notion was introduced into the Christian system by the philosophising Christians, as they have been called. It was resisted by the great body of believers as a strange and novel doctrine. To the learned, however, it was acceptable, and they willingly promoted it. The following extract from Tertullian, one of the early Christian writers, will shed a flood of light upon the matter. "The simple," says he, "(not to call them ignorant and unlearned,) who are always the greater part of believers, since the rule of faith itself transfers them from the many Gods of the heathen to the one true God, not understanding that the one God is indeed to be believed, but with his own economy [that is his distribution into three persons] are startled at the economy. They presume that the number and arrangement of a Trinity is a division of the Unity. They, therefore, hold out that two or even three Gods are worshipped by us; assuming that they are the worshippers of the one God." From this we may learn how adverse the great body of plain unlettered Christians were to the reception of the new doctrine.

Alexandria the famous seat of the Platonic philosophy was the birth-place of the Christian Trinity. Here it was that the famous controversy broke out concerning the Godhead, in the early part of the fourth century. This is known in history as the "Arian controversy," which for so long a time shook the church and the world. The Arians and the Athanasians (the Unitarians and the Trinitarians of the time), each experienced alternate successes and defeats. Now Arian was degraded and banished by one Council of the church; then Athanasius by another. Sometimes we find an Arian Emperor on the throne, and sometimes an Athanasian. The controversy was carried on with great vigor until the awful severities of Theodosius the Great put down the Arians, and secured the triumph to the Athanasians. Never was a persecution more ruthlessly persisted in than that of Theodosius. "As he persevered inflexibly," says Waddington, "his severities were attended by general and lasting success, and the doctrine of Arius, if not perfectly extirpated, withered from that moment rapidly and irrecoverably." From the page of history, then, we learn that it was by brute force, the Unitarianism of the early times was crushed.

The three creeds found in the book of Common Prayer—the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian,—furnish an excellent illustration of the progress of the Trinitarian doctrine in the world. The *Apostles' Creed* runs thus:—"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, &c."—Now this creed we say is an *Unitarian creed*, and as we have already intimated was the only one publicly recognized by the church for the first three centuries.

Next we have the *Nicene Creed*, composed for the most part at the council of Nice, A.D. 325, which was assembled by order of the emperor Constantine, to settle the Arian controversy. Here we have the first authoritative promulgation of the Deity of the Son. In this creed Christ is styled "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, &c."—But even in it, as it came from the Nicene Council, we have no statement of the separate Deity of the Holy Ghost, or third person of the Trinity. This was not added until upwards of half a century afterwards. The statement

* Adv. Praez. Sect. 3, p. 502. † History of the Church, p. 99.

of the Council of Nice on this head was simply this:—"I believe in the Holy Ghost."—But at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381, an addition was made to it, asserting the separate Deity of the third person. As amended by this Council the clause runs thus, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, &c." The words, "and the Son" above enclosed in brackets, were another subsequent addition. Thus it was, that at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381, the doctrine of the Trinity received what the learned Mosheim (himself a Trinitarian,) styled its "finishing touch." Now we are strongly of opinion that if this doctrine had been known to, or taught by, Moses and the prophets, or Christ and his apostles, it would not have required its "finishing touch" from the Council of Constantinople.

Next we have the *Athanasian Creed*. We have no certainty concerning its origin. Waddington says it is commonly attributed to Vigilius Tapsensis who lived at the end of the fifth century. The writer whoever he was, forged the name of Athanasius to it in order to gain it credit and currency. In it we have the doctrine of the Trinity stated in a bolder and more decisive form than in the Nicene creed. This will be seen by the following extract:—"The Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty; and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet there are not three Almighties: but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord; and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity, to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; but the whole three persons are co-eternal together; and co-equal. So that in all things as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity." Now this creed was not generally received among Christians until probably four centuries after it was written. It was never established by any general Council of the Church. The doctrine of a "Trinity of persons numerically the same, or having all one and the same singular existent essence," which may be considered, we suppose, the perfected and proper form, was owned and consummated by the Lateran Council, A. D. 1215. It is worthy of note likewise that it was this same Council which established the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

Thus by casting a careful glance into the history of the Church, we find that the doctrine of the Trinity had no existence amongst the Christians of the earliest times—that it crept into the Christian system from the refined speculations of Gentile philosophy—that its prevalence was secured by a rigorous and persevering exercise of worldly power—and that it can be marked from one period to another in its progress of formation. From all of which we derive a powerful reason for declining to receive it.

5. Not from the writings of Unitarians alone, but even from the writings of Trinitarians themselves we derive an argument against it. If the doctrine of the Trinity were plainly and intelligibly revealed, we should observe no discordancies or contradictions on the subject amongst those who hold it. Though Unitarians may differ on minor points, yet there is no discordance among them concerning the doctrine of the Godhead. They all agree that *God is one*, and that the *Father is the only true God*. But among Trinitarians we find wide and important differences in the matter of the Trinity. We here submit a sample of those discordancies, taken from the *Unitarian Miscellany*:—

* The argument here disclosed by Ecclesiastical History against the doctrine of the Trinity surely comes with great force. The attempt made to explain it away, by saying that the Deity of the Son and the Deity of the Holy Ghost were only declared in the order of time in which they were denied, seems to us very unsatisfactory. For it is admitted that the evidence for the distinct and separate Deity of the third person is less obvious and copious than that for the Deity of the second. This being the case, it should certainly have been called in question before the other, and thus we would be led to look for the assertion of the Deity of the Holy Ghost before the declaration of the Deity of the Son. But the case is just the reverse.

† Cudworth's Intellectual System, p. 604. Nonon's Statement, p. 61.

‡ The catalogue of discordancies inserted above may be found cited in connection with another subject, in a former number of the *Bible Christian*.

The ATHANASIAN CREED says,—“The Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty; and yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.” We will now bring Church against Church, on a very important article of this Creed.

The GREEK CHURCH holds that the Holy Ghost “is from the Father only, and not from the Father and the Son.”

The NEW HAMPSHIRE GENERAL ASSOCIATION has said that “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are names of office, not of essence: these three are self-existent persons in one God.”

The venerable BAXTER advises us “to be none of those who shall charge with heresy all who say the three Persons are God understanding himself, God understood by himself, and God loving himself.”

“What are my admiring thoughts of God?” says DOOLITTLE on the Assembly’s Catechism, “one single essence, yet three in subsistence; of three, that one cannot be the other, yet all three are one, that are distinct, yet really are the same.”

But Dr. SOUTH asserts that there is “one infinite, eternal mind, and three somethings that are not distinct minds.”

Dr. SHURLOCK, however, refutes Dr. South, by insisting that “the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are as really distinct persons as Peter, James, and John; each of which is God. We must allow each person to be a God. These three infinite minds are distinguished, just as three created minds are, by self-consciousness.”—Dr. S. also says, that “to say there are three divine persons, and not three distinct infinite minds, is both heresy and nonsense.”

But Dr. HOPKINS assures us that “it must be carefully observed, that when this word [Person] is applied to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as three distinct persons, it does not import the same distinction as when applied to men.”

Dr. WATERLAND’S idea of the Trinity was that of “three distinct persons, entirely equal to, and independent upon each other, yet making up one and the same Being.”

Dr. WALLIS, however, who called himself a Trinitarian, says, that “the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are no more three distinct intelligent persons, than the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, are three Gods.” He further says, that “the three persons are only three eternal relations of God to his creatures, as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; while Dr. South had said that the three persons are three postures, or internal relations of the one substance of Deity to itself.”

Here is Archbishop SECKER’S explanation:—“Since there is not a plurality of Gods, and yet the Son and Spirit are each of them God no less than the Father; it plainly follows, that they are, in a manner by us inconceivable, so distinguished from him that no one of them is the other.”

We are told in the Athanasian Creed, that “in this Trinity none is afore or after other;” but Mr. SPAULDING rolls us that “the divine principle necessarily supposes an order of divine persons, viz.—a covenant maker or mover, which gives the idea of a first person; a covenant subject, or one brought into covenant, which gives the idea of a second person; and a covenant interest, which gives the idea of a third person. And here again a Trinity is implied:—first, the inaugurator, or one who anoints; second, the inaugurated, or one who is anointed; and third, the oil, which the anointer pours, and the anointed receives.”

The following is Bishop BURNAGE’S explanation of the Trinity:—“If I say the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be three, and every one distinctly God, it is true; but if I say they be three, and every one a distinct God, it is false. I may say the divine persons are distinct in the divine nature, but I cannot say the divine nature is divided into the divine persons. I may say, God the Father is one God, and the Son is one God, and the Holy Ghost is one God; but I cannot say the Father is one God, and the Son another God, and the Holy Ghost a third God. I may say that the Father begot another who is God, yet I cannot say he begot another God. And from the Father and the Son proceedeth another who is God, yet I cannot say, from the Father and the Son proceedeth another God.”

Here is Bishop GASTRELL’S explanation:—“The Father includes the whole idea of God and something more; the Son includes the whole idea of God and something more; the Holy Ghost includes the whole idea of God and something more; while all together, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, make one entire God, and no more.”

Dr. BUNNET maintains “one self-existent, and two dependent beings; but asserts that the two latter are so united to and inhabited by the former, that by virtue of that union, divine perfections may be ascribed, and divine worship paid to them.” In opposition to the Athanasian Creed, which says that the Son is begotten and not created, and that the Holy Ghost is neither created nor begotten, but proceeding, he avers that “the Son and the Holy Ghost are created beings, and are Gods only by the indwelling of the Father’s Godhead.”

Bishop BURGESS, teaches, that “the Father is a person, but not a being, the Son is a person but not a being, and the Holy Ghost is a person but not a being, and these three nonentities make one perfect being.”

The doctrine of the FRENCH and BELGIC CONFESSION is that “the Father is the cause of all; the Son is his wisdom and word; and the Holy Ghost is his virtue or power.”

A CONJECTURE DIVINE informs us, that “we may consider God as standing in a circle; standing on this part he is the Father, on that he is the Son, and on the other he is the Holy Spirit.”

And HENNER, in his Bampton lectures, says that “the Father is the first person in the Trinity, the archangel Michael the second, and the angel Gabriel the third.”

In such discordancies and conflicting statements, we perceive ample evidence of the uncertainty and unsoundness of the whole theory.

The doctrine of the Trinity, as we have already said, stands on a basis of inferential reasoning, not on any express scriptural declaration. Certain texts are selected, and by the peculiar exposition given to them, or by joining several isolated texts together, the triune theory of the Godhead is constructed. But in building it up in this way, Trinitarian Theologians disagree among themselves concerning the validity of the

passages for the purposes alleged. “There is scarcely one text,” says the eminent John Locke, “alleged to the Trinitarians, which is not otherwise expounded by their own writers.” Take for example one of the very first passages employed by Trinitarians generally, to construct their system. *Gen. i. 1.* “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In this text the Hebrew word *Elohim*, translated *God*, is in the plural number, whence it is argued that there is a plurality of persons in the Deity. But Professor Stuart, and other Hebrew grammarians, tell us that such a form of expression (called by them the *pluralis excellentie*) was “commonly employed by the Hebrews for the sake of emphasis.” And John Calvin himself in his note on the passage especially warns his readers “against such violent interpretations.” From all this we derive additional evidence to convince us of the uncertainty and unsoundness of the Trinitarian system.

Here we must pause. Our remarks on this subject have extended much further than we purposed on commencing. In the foregoing sketch we have given some of our reasons for declining to receive the commonly-accepted doctrine of the Trinity. Are they, or are they not sufficient? Reader, judge for thyself.

THE FAITH OF THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN.

The following Statement of the Unitarian Faith may not be out of place in our present sheet. It is taken from the Discourse of the Rev. Dr. Gannett, preached at the dedication of the Montreal Unitarian Church:—

“We believe in God as the Supreme, Perfect, and Infinite Being, Lord of heaven and earth, Author of all life, Source of every blessing, Searcher of hearts, and Judge of men. We believe in his universal, constant, and righteous providence, through which alone the frame-work of the creation and the processes of animate or inanimate existence are sustained. We believe in his moral government, which he exercises over all beings endowed with intellectual or moral capacities, and which, as it is rightly exercised, so is inflexibly administered. We believe in his paternal character, in which he has been pleased to reveal himself to our admiration and love; a character which never shews him to us as weakly indulgent or capriciously tender, but as always consistent with his own perfections while full of parental regard towards men. We believe in the requisitions of duty which he has promulgated, by which are laid upon us the obligations of outward and inward righteousness, and it is made incumbent on us to cultivate purity, devotion, disinterestedness, and the harmonious expansion of our nature, that the result may be an excellence which shall redound to the glory of God. We believe in his mercy, which enables him, without impairing the integrity of his government or subverting the original conditions of his favour, to forgive the penitent sinner and admit the renewed soul to an inheritance of eternal life. We believe in his revelations, which he has made by those of old times who spake as they were moved by the holy spirit—Moses and the Divinely-inspired teachers of the Jewish people, and in a latter age by Jesus Christ, the Son of his love and the Messenger of his grace. We believe that God is one in every sense in which the term can be applied to him—one in nature, in person, in character, in revelation: and therefore we are Unitarians. We believe that Jesus was the Christ—the Anointed and Sent of God, whose truth he proclaimed, whose authority he represented, whose love he unfolded: and therefore we are Christians. We believe that Jesus Christ came on a special mission to our world—to instruct the ignorant, to save the sinful, and to give assurance of immortality to those who were subject to death; that such a Teacher and Redeemer was needed; that he spake as never man spake, lived as never man lived, and died as never man died. We read the history of his life with mingled admiration and gratitude. We are moved by his cross to exercises of faith, penitence, and hope. We rejoice in his resurrection, and celebrate him as the Head of his Church, the authoritative Expounder of the Divine will, the faultless Pattern of the Christian character, the Manifestation and Pledge of the true life. We believe that man is a free and responsible being, capable of rising to successive heights of virtue, or of falling into deeper and deeper degradation; that sin is his ruin, and faith in spiritual and eternal realities the means of his salvation; that if he sin, it is through choice or negligence, but that in working out his own salvation he needs the Divine assistance. We believe that man in his individual person is from early childhood, through the force of appetite, the dis-

advantage of ignorance, and the strength of temptation, liable to moral corruption; that social life is in many of its forms artificial, and in many of its influences injurious; and that both the individual and society must be regenerated by the action of Christian truth. We believe that all life, private and public, all human powers and relations, all thought, feeling, and activity, should be brought under the control of religious principle and be pervaded by Christian sentiment. We believe that piety is the only sure foundation of morality, and morality the needed evidence of piety. We believe that “perfection from weakness through progress” is the law of life for man; and that this law can be kept only where an humble heart is joined with a resolute mind and an earnest faith. We believe that men should love and serve one another, while all love the Heavenly Father, and follow the Lord Jesus to a common glory. We believe in human immortality, and a righteous retribution after death: when they who have lived in obedience, or reconciled themselves through sincere repentance, shall enter upon a nobler fruition of life; while they who have been disobedient and impenitent, shall realize the consequences of their folly in shame and suffering. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as containing the authentic records of God’s wonderful and gracious ways, seen in the history of his ancient people, and in the miraculous works and Divine teachings of Jesus and his Apostles; and to these Scriptures we appeal as the decisive authority upon questions of faith or duty, interpreting them in the devout exercise of that reason, through which alone we are capable of receiving a communication from Heaven. We believe in the Christian Church, as a consequence of the labours and sufferings by which Christ has gathered unto himself, out of many nations and communions, “a peculiar people,” embracing his Gospel and cherishing his spirit—the Church on earth, with its ministry, its ordinances and its responsibilities, the anticipation and promise of the Church in heaven.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES’ RELIEF BILL.

The Bills for extending certain privileges to the “Unitarian Christians” of Toronto, to the “Christian” connexion and “Bible Christians” of Upper Canada, and to the “Christian Universalist Association,” have all passed the Legislative Assembly, and are now before the Legislative Council. They have all been read a second time in the Council, and are to be brought before a Committee of the whole on the 15th inst.—It is gratifying to observe that in neither branch of the Legislature has there been any desire evinced to withhold the privileges sought for by the petitioners in the several cases.

LOWELL, MASS.

A new Unitarian congregation has been organized at Lowell, Mass., and the Rev. M. A. H. Niles installed pastor. The services of installation took place on the 8th April, when the sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. Peabody, of Boston.—Mr. Niles was formerly a Trinitarian Congregationalist Minister at Marblehead, but has recently renounced Trinitarianism.

RENUNCIATION OF TRINITARIANISM.

The Rev. R. HASSALL, recently a Minister of the “Methodist New Connexion” in this city, will deliver a discourse in the Unitarian Church, on Sunday evening, 17th instant, in which he will state his reasons for renouncing the doctrine of the Trinity.

ERRATUM.—In 1st page, 3rd column, 29th line from bottom,—for *expatiate* read *expiate*.

MRS. DANA’S LETTERS.

LETTERS TO RELATIVES & FRIENDS, chiefly in Reply to Arguments in support of the Doctrine of the TRINITY.

BY MARY S. B. DANA,

Author of “The Southern and Northern Harps,” “The Parted Family,” &c.

For Sale at the Book-Store of Mr. C. Bryson, St. Francois Xavier Street.

ORDINATION SERMON.

A DISCOURSE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER,—preached at the Ordination of the Rev. O. W. B. PEABODY, at Burlington, Vermont.

BY REV. DR. PEABODY, OF SPRINGFIELD, MASS. Together with the Remarks of REV. JOHN CORDNER, OF MONTREAL,

on giving the Fellowship of the Churches on the same occasion.

For Sale at Mr. Bryson’s Book-Store.

REMARKS

THE TWO NATURES IN CHRIST.

"MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I," said our Saviour. (John xiv. 28.) And again he says, "MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN ALL." (John x. 29.) To the same effect also is the language of the great Apostle of the Gentiles; "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and THE HEAD OF CHRIST IS GOD." (1 Cor. xi. 3.) Of a similar import is a large class of passages in the Bible. Their meaning is obvious,—it cannot be mistaken. They teach the subordination of the Son to the Father; they teach the subordination of Christ to God.

We are very well aware, however, by what means it is sought to evade the force of such plain and powerful testimony of our Saviour and his Apostles. We are very well aware how it is sought to make their words have no meaning in the controversy concerning Christ's supreme Deity. It is by a very ingenious device, but a most unwarrantable one. It is assumed that Christ had two natures; and by a dexterous employment of this assumption, the advocates of the triune theory of the Godhead seek to nullify every plain statement of the Scriptures regarding the supremacy of the Father and the subordination of the Son. But the assumption is entirely gratuitous, adopted solely with a view to meet the pressing exigency before us. It is a pure fallacy—a mere logical artifice; and yet, without it, the Trinitarian ground could not be maintained one moment. It is assumed that Christ had two natures,—one divine and the other human;—that he was perfect God and perfect man mysteriously combined. And then it is thought the force of the direct statements which teach his subordination is turned aside by asserting that such things were affirmed of, and by, our Lord, in reference to his human nature only. This is a mournful way of dealing with the obvious teachings of the Word of God. That it meets with so general a reception affords lamentable proof of the readiness of men to adopt any method of explanation which will enable them to cling to their favorite notions. Again we say, this distinction of two natures in Christ is a mere gratuitous assumption, adopted to meet the emergency of the case. Such a distinction is nowhere made in the Bible. Nowhere is it said 'this is spoken of, or by, Christ in reference to his human nature,' or 'this, in reference to his divine nature.' We look in vain for the statement of such a doctrine as that of the 'two natures' in the Scriptures. Nowhere is it said in the Sacred Records that 'our Saviour had two natures.' Such an expression is not to be found from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. Well hath it been styled "a mere human invention, to bolster up a human error."

In thus stating with such great plainness our opinion concerning the common doctrine of the two natures in Christ, we are not insensible to the fact, that to many minds some of our expressions may appear abrupt, unauthorized, and dogmatical. We confess we have not endeavoured to trim, or soften, or smooth our phrase in this matter. We believe the theory of the two natures to be fallacious, and we have said so very plainly. We have styled it a mere assumption, because it directly rests upon a mere assumption. It is high time that people should look to this—it is high time that the attention of the enquirer should be fairly directed to it—for on it really depends for support the doctrine of the Trinity. If this prop be unsound the whole structure of the triune theory of the Godhead must topple and fall. And it is unsound. Let us look at the mode of proof by which it is sought to be established. Two Scripture phrases (or classes or phrases) are produced, in one of which it is said Christ's supreme Deity is taught, and in the other his subordinate nature. Both, it is urged, must be admitted in the sense attached to them, and from this it is urged that Christ had two natures. The theory thus constructed is then employed to defend the doctrine of Christ's supremacy against the overwhelming evidence of Scripture, teaching his subordination, which can be arrayed against it. Now we ask the careful reader to mark the fallacy. Is it not plain that in the first instance—in constructing the theory of the two natures—the real point in controversy (Christ's supreme Deity) is gratuitously assumed, or taken for granted, without

proof? And then the theory thus fallaciously constructed is employed to protect the very doctrine which was gratuitously assumed for the purpose of constructing it. Is not the fallacy obvious? Christ's supreme Deity must be satisfactorily proved before the doctrine of the two natures can be established. And this just brings us back to the primary question.

We say then, without any hesitation, that it is impossible to construct the theory of the two natures without resorting to the fallacy of 'begging the question,' or assuming that to be true which is the very point in dispute. Nothing short of a distinct Scriptural statement could warrant its adoption by the Scriptural Christian. And this, as we have already said, is nowhere to be found.

There is great danger to be apprehended from the admission of gratuitous assumptions into the interpretation of Scripture. With such a liberty, men might prove almost anything from the sacred volume, and find means to evade the force of any argument, however cogent and precise. Let us illustrate by an example. Christianity is universally held to be a religion of peace; our Saviour inculcated peaceful principles; his own life corresponded with his precepts—it was eminently peaceful: "Peace on earth" was the strain which ushered him into the world, and "peace" was the legacy he bequeathed to his disciples on his departure from it. But suppose a sect should arise, claiming to be his followers, who should assert that Christianity was a warfaring religion; that, in fact, it was a Christian duty to prosecute war, far and wide; and this not merely defensive war, but aggressive war,—a war which should lead them to invade unoffending and defenceless foreign nations, murder their people, destroy their property, and desolate their homes. Suppose we were to enter on an argument with such persons, in order to show them how utterly opposite their views of Christianity were to the whole teaching and spirit of the religion as represented in the New Testament, and, in doing so, we should cite passage after passage affording the clearest proof that Christ was a teacher of peace. Suppose all this done; and our warfaring Christians should reply, "All you have urged we fully admit; but it does not affect the question at issue. The passages you cite have reference merely to Christ in his character as a peacemaker, but do not bear against his character as a warfarer. Remember how he said, 'I came not to send peace but a sword;'—you do not seem to understand that he is to be viewed in two distinct lights;—you do not seem to apprehend that he was both a peacemaker and a warfarer." To this very strange reply we should naturally answer, "Your distinction of two characters in Christ is a pure assumption—it has no proper foundation; and we put it to you, as candid and conscientious people, will you avail yourselves of such an artifice to maintain your position, and to evade the prevalent teaching of the Scriptures against you?" We are then met by the rejoinder, that it is necessary to make the assumption of the two-fold character of our Lord, in order to interpret such a passage as that wherein he says he 'came to send a sword,' in harmony with the other teachings of the Scriptures concerning him.

Now the analogy is obvious between this case and that which is more particularly under review. In both cases, the general teaching of the Scriptures is plain, powerful, precise, and not to be misunderstood; but, in both cases, there are a few texts to be found which clash, apparently, with the general teaching. Rightly understood, they will be found to involve no contradiction. It is our business, then, to endeavour to understand them, and to discover how they may be interpreted in harmony with the current language and general tenor of Scripture. We are not at liberty to make gratuitous assumptions to suit our own purposes and to save some favorite doctrinal theory from being overthrown.—Common sense revolts at the assumption which would unite two characters in Christ so entirely incompatible as those of a perfect peacemaker and a bloody warfarer. And surely the assumption is not less unreasonable and impossible which would combine in one and the same person the attributes of the Supreme God and the qualities of a mortal man. It is to assume that the mind of that person is at once created and uncreated, finite and infinite, than which no greater contradiction can be supposed or asserted.

But even this assumption of two natures in our Lord cannot be made to cover all the circumstances of the case, and protect the theory of Christ's supreme Deity from the difficulties which press upon it from the plain statements of Scripture. Those statements not only negate the supremacy of the Son, but they affirm the supremacy of the Father. In thus making express affirmation of the supreme Deity of the Father only, they obviously exclude the supreme Deity of the Son in any and every sense. Let us advert

to what Christ says of the time of his coming in judgment:—"Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matth. xxiv. 36.) In the parallel passage in Mark, (xiii. 32,) it is thus written: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels who are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." In these passages it is evident that our Saviour disavows knowledge of the event referred to, in every sense, and assigns that knowledge to the Father exclusively. Here, then, is a difficulty which cannot be met even by the assumption of the two natures. By what ingenuity the force of these passages is to be evaded, and their plain statements set aside, we cannot even conjecture. We have seen the orthodox explanations of these texts; and they do not seem to us to have even the poor merit of plausibility.

Another objection we have to urge against this assumed theory of two natures, (and certainly not the least serious one,) is, that it imputes equivocation to our Saviour. If ever there had been any intimation given, either by himself or by any of the sacred writers, that our Lord had two natures, and that sometimes he spoke in the one and sometimes in the other, we should not feel justified in urging so very serious a charge against the theory under notice. But no such intimation ever was given. We feel bound, therefore, in vindication of the integrity and consistency of Christ, to bear solemn testimony against so dangerous and so groundless an assumption. What! shall it be said of him 'in whose mouth guile was never found,' that he explicitly disavowed knowledge of the time of an event, when, in reality, he was in full possession of that knowledge? Remember the answer he gave to the mother who came to him requesting for her sons certain places of dignity in his kingdom. His reply was, "I sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." (Matth. xx. 23.) Shall it be said, we ask again, of him who knew no deceit, that he positively disclaimed all power to confer a certain privilege, when, in reality, that power was fully his? Suppose any of us were to go to a Governor of this Province, and apply to him for a certain office; and suppose he were to say, plainly and without any explanation, that that office was not in his power to grant,—that the Sovereign of Britain kept its bestowal in his own hands. What would be our inference? Surely it would be, that the Governor had it not in his power to bestow the office. And if any one claiming to be that Governor's especial friend should afterwards seek to draw a line of distinction between his personal and his official capacity, and say that he really had the power, and that his denial of it was only to be understood in reference to one of his two capacities—in such a case, would not every right-minded man regard the denial in the light of a wretched equivocation? Now, shall we be bold enough to place our Saviour in a similar position, by saying that he really had the power to confer the dignity on Zebedee's sons, while he positively and unqualifiedly disclaimed it? We honor Christ too well to impute any such equivocation to him. We reverence him too highly to suppose that he would employ language so calculated to mislead those whom he immediately addressed, and so calculated to mislead every simple-minded reader of the Bible. Our opinion of the Saviour is this: that whenever he spoke he meant just what he said,—without the slightest approach to equivocation,—without any mental reservation whatsoever.

It is of great importance that we should look closely to this theory of the two natures in Christ. It makes our Lord a shifting image instead of a distinct reality. It throws a cloud of obscurity about him who was the brightness of the Father's glory. According to it, he is now one thing and then another, and thus we are prevented from gaining any clear and definite perceptions of his person or his character. Nothing has ever surprised us more than to mark with what unsuspecting confidence the Trinitarian controversialist glides from the one 'nature' of Christ to the other, just as he finds it convenient for his argument. It is but seldom he thinks it necessary to attempt any proof of the 'two natures.' Yet, without its aid, he could not even pretend to withstand the Scriptural arguments brought against the Trinitarian theory, so plain, so powerful, so precise, and so overwhelming in number. What can be more remarkable than to hear and read of men first admitting the subordination of the Son, and then proceeding to prove his Supreme Deity? This has about the same meaning as if they were first to admit a thing to be black, and then proceed to prove that it is white. It has about the same meaning as if they were first to admit a figure to be a circle, and then proceed to prove that it is a triangle.

QUESTIONS WORTH CONSIDERING.

ONE QUESTION IN ARITHMETIC.

According to the statements of Trinitarian creeds, The FATHER is a distinct Person, and truly and fully God; and therefore an Object of supreme worship,.....that is 1
The SON is also a distinct Person, and truly and fully God; and therefore an Object of supreme worship,.....that is 1
The HOLY SPIRIT is likewise a distinct Person, and truly and fully God; and therefore an Object of supreme worship,.....that is 1
Required.—The sum total of those who are truly and fully God; and therefore distinct Objects of supreme worship,.....

TWO QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY.

According to the popular theology, sin committed against an Infinite Being requires an Infinite Sacrifice. Nothing short of this, it is said, could expiate the sins of the world. But no being is infinite except God. In the death of Christ, then, did God die?
If God did not die, what becomes of the common theory of vicarious atonement by an Infinite Sacrifice?

THREE QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE.

We find it stated in the Bible that "God is One;" but where is it stated, that "God is Three"?
We find the phrase "God the Father" in the Bible; but where is there the phrase "God the Son," or "God the Holy Ghost"?
Where is it said in the Bible that Christ had "two natures"?

He that hath a mind to think, let him think on the foregoing questions.

He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear the following declarations:—

"Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is One Lord."—(Deut. vi. 4.)

....."The Father" is the "only true God."—(John xvii. 1—3.)

Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God."—(Matt. xvi. 16.)

Additional Query:—Can a Son be coeval with his own Father?

It is quite possible that the naked plainness of some of the above questions may be a cause of offence. But as no offence is intended, it may be well for all parties concerned to inquire candidly whether the statements are not true, and perfectly consistent with the systems of the prevalent theology. With respect to the tri-personality of the Deity, the question as stated above has entirely the meaning which appears on the face of it, or else we do not see how it has any real meaning at all. If the doctrine of the Trinity be only Sabellianism, the sooner the fact is known the better. Sabellianism has been aptly termed "Unitarianism in a mist." If Dr. Wallis's theory be correct, that "the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are no more three distinct intelligent Persons, than the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, are three Gods," then there is only a paper wall between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism. If this be so, let it be broken through at once. But if Dr. Sherlock's theory, that "the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are as really distinct Persons as Peter, James, and John, each of which is God: We must allow each Person (he says) to be a God;"—if this theory be the more popular and prevalent one, then it is obvious that the statement upon which the foregoing question is founded is perfectly correct.

In the 'Questions in Theology,' stated above, it is asked Did God die? This we know is a startling question, yet it is directly suggested by the common theory of vicarious atonement by an infinite sacrifice. That theory involves the suffering and death of the Almighty; or else we do not see that it has any proper meaning at all. It is of no avail to urge, in opposition to this conclusion, the mysterious combination of the "two natures," for if the element of infinity does not enter into that combination, and become the subject of suffering and death, it cannot be an infinite sacrifice. Without this, it can only be a finite sacrifice; and to admit this, would be to unsettle and unsay the whole system.

There are some, we know, who are not afraid to carry out the system to its unavoidable conclusion, and state that conclusion in all its naked plainness, painful and startling though it be. We do not now refer to such expressions as those of "a crucified God," &c., which may be found in the hymns of some Orthodox Churches, nor to the well-known passage of the Litany, where the Deity is invoked 'by his agony and bloody sweat,—by his cross and passion,—by his death and burial,' &c. We refer rather to the sober prose writer, who sits down deliberately, in this age of the world, and writes the (to us) fearful doctrine that God died! Not very long since, a theological work appeared in the United States, entitled, "The Sufferings of Christ, by a Layman." In this the doctrine is stated nakedly and plainly. "In the grand drama of the New Testament," says the writer, "whose author is God, and whose theme is Salvation, the Godhead and manhood of the Mediator act throughout in concert. They are one and indivisible; separated, or capable of separation, in nothing. They are born together; together they are wrapped in the straw of the manger. They suffer together; TOGETHER THEY DIE."

This doctrine was repudiated by some of the Orthodox prints, and it is well to perceive them startled by such a statement; yet we cannot see any thing in it but the legitimate result of their own system. Many there are, we know, who are disposed to throw a veil of words over the theory, to conceal its inconsistency, and take shelter under the common plea of mystery, to evade the force of the legitimate conclusion which flows from it. Wherever that conclusion is disowned, we should be sorry to press it; but at the same time, we maintain that to disown the conclusion, is virtually to abandon the theory.

Of the 'Questions on the Bible' we shall say nothing, further than to remind the reader, that Scripture doctrines can always be stated in Scripture language.