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By Wendell Phillips
Received July 10, 1882 No.

AN

EXAMINATION

OF

THE DIVINE TESTIMONY,

CONCERNING THE CHARACTER

OF THE

SON OF GOD.

BY HENRY GREW,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

"This is my beloved Son."

"When we have humbly and attentively considered and ascertained the meaning of any proposition, we should implicitly believe it, how contrary soever it may be to our former opinion, or that of others in reputation for wisdom." SCOTT.

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DIALOGUE.

Amicus. I AM informed, my dear Veritas, that you have given up the glorious doctrines of the Trinity, and the supreme deity of the Son of God;—doctrines which the true church has always maintained as the foundation of hope and objects of rejoicing. Feeling a deep interest in the cause of truth and in your welfare, I called this morning to enquire of you respecting this report.

Veritas. I thank you, beloved Amicus, for your christian solicitude, and for coming to me as a friend and a brother. How lamentable is the conduct of some christians, who are more eager to spread abroad reports of a brother's sentiments, which generally misrepresent his real views, than to endeavor to restore him "in the spirit of meekness" from his supposed error. I freely confess to you that my views are changed respecting the subjects you mention. Having adopted the principle, that the word of God is the only standard of truth, I have renounced those views, which I was taught in my youth, which do not appear to accord with the divine testimony. As, however, I feel that I am a fallible creature, I desire ever to attend with meekness and candor to the arguments which may be offered in opposition to my sentiments. If truth is our object, we shall not shrink from the strictest and closest investigation.

Amicus. Very true; and when brethren of different views, conscious of the imperfection of their knowledge, confer with each other, with a pure desire after truth, they may hope, by a candid examination of each argument, and a dependence on the Holy Spirit, to benefit one another, and to promote the cause of truth. But if we are only concerned to support our pre-conceived opinions, and to bear down those who oppose them, we are in a fair way to live and die in our errors. I fear, however, my dear Veritas, that you have erred from "the faith once delivered to the saints."

Veritas. It is my sincere desire to receive every word of the divine testimony. Permit me, then, to ask, what revealed truth do you suppose I disbelieve?

Amicus. The doctrine of the Trinity, and the doctrine of the supreme deity of Jesus Christ.

Veritas. Please to repeat the passage of scripture which reveals to us that there are three persons in one God.

Amicus. I acknowledge that there is no passage which expressly declares this doctrine. But there are some passages from which the most pious and learned saints in all ages have inferred it.

Veritas. It is evident from the history of the church, that many christians in different ages have disbelieved it. Be this, however, as it may; were the christians you speak of infallible? Are they our standard of faith and practice?

Amicus. Certainly not.

Veritas. Allow me to ask you, dear brother, where you first learned the doctrine of the Trinity?

Amicus. I confess I was first taught it in the Assembly's Catechism; but I have since examined the word of God, and believe it is therein revealed.

Veritas. Do you not think, that by being taught the religious systems of pious men, (all which must be acknowledged to be imperfect) by those whom we revered and loved, that we were in danger of imbibing some errors? Do you not believe that when we read the scriptures in early life, we were far more apt to affix that sense to certain passages, which agreed with the catechism or creed we had learned, than to examine by scripture itself the real import of them? And have we not, consequently, reason to fear that many of our ideas on divine subjects have been received by tradition from our fathers, and not from the word of the Lord?

Amicus. I feel the propriety and force of your observations. I never before realized so much the danger we are in of being misled by the opinions and practices of men, deservedly esteemed, indeed, but fallible and imperfect.

Veritas. Since my faith respecting the doctrine of the Trinity was shaken, I have considered it my duty and privilege to examine *the whole* of the divine testimony, with particular reference to the subject, and to *compare all the passages* which relate to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Permit me to inquire, my dear Amicus, if you have ever done this?

Amicus. I confess I have never examined the subject in the manner you speak of. I am sensible, however, that it is the best method of ascertaining the truth, if it is done with a humble dependence on divine teaching.

Veritas. Without this all our researches will be vain. May the Lord in infinite mercy guide us into all truth.

PREFACE.

In my researches after truth some years ago, my faith in the common doctrine of the Trinity was shaken. Deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of obtaining, so far as is revealed, a correct knowledge of "the only true God," and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, I have humbly endeavored to "search the scriptures," looking unto Jesus for the guidance of his holy Spirit which he promised his disciples to lead them into all truth. The result of this investigation, which has been delightful, though laborious, may be seen in the following pages. My desire, if I am not self-deceived, has been to ascertain, by diligently and prayerfully "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," what is revealed for my faith and love. Whether I have been guided by the Spirit of truth, or by my own wisdom, which is foolishness, will soon be determined at the bar of God. With that tribunal in view, it is indeed a small thing to be judged of man's judgment.

While I rejoice in all those exertions of christians in the present day to advance the holy kingdom of the Redeemer, which accord with the "wisdom of God;" my mind has been deeply impressed with a sense of the vast importance of the heralds of "the everlasting gospel" possessing a correct knowledge of "the *only true God*," and of Jesus Christ *whom he hath sent*. How important that they should declare that gospel to perishing men, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

I beg leave to remark to the reader, that it is necessary to remember, that however firmly he may believe his present sentiments, no man is *infallible*. To read any work of this kind, with such a positive assurance of the correctness of our present views, as is consistent only with infallibility, is useless. We may as well cry out heresy, the moment we know an author's sentiments are contrary to our own, as to do so after we have heard his arguments, for such a feeling of mind will resist the most conclusive proofs, and prevent our conviction of the most important errors.

All I ask, is a candid examination of my views and arguments by "the word of the Lord." If they will not bear this test, I desire they may be rejected, as it is the truth of God alone I wish to advocate and publish.

Towards all such as are taught by the Spirit of truth, to believe on the Son of God as the only foundation of their

hope, and the object of their confidence, love and worship, I desire to extend the hand of christian fellowship, and to cherish the affection of holy love, although their views, in some important respects, may differ from my own. Far be it, that we should call "that common or unclean which God hath cleansed." Far be it from us to reject those whom the Lord hath received. May that forbearance which the merciful Redeemer exercises towards his disciples, be ever exercised by them towards one another. And let us never refuse to unite with the inspired apostle in pronouncing the divine benediction on "*all* that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord *both theirs and ours.*" I desire to love all in whom I can trace the image of my dear Savior, whatever they may say or think of me.

Let those, however, who *refuse* to "call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord," solemnly consider what part they can have in the worship of the heavenly hosts who are saying, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and ever."

Let those also who, in that wisdom which is foolishness with God, reject "the atonement" of his beloved Son, seriously consider what part they can have among that blessed assembly who have *all* "washed their robes and made them white *in the blood of the Lamb.*"

I rejoice and praise God that he hath mercifully spared my life to bear this testimony to his holy truth; and to his divine blessing I now humbly commend it.

CHAPTER I.

Containing an examination of the divine testimony concerning the highest character and glorious perfections of the Son of God.

1. *The testimony of the Prophets.*

Isa. ix. 6. And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, &c. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, &c. Isa. vii. 14. Matt. i. 23. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us. Micah v. 2. Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. John iii. 31. He that cometh from heaven is above all. John i. 34. And I saw, and bear record that this is the Son of God. John iii. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him.

2. *The testimony of the Apostles.*

John i. 1—3. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. Eph. iii. 3. 9. God created all things BY Jesus Christ. Rev. xix. 13. And his name is called the Word of God. John xx. 28. And Thomas answered, and said unto him, My Lord, and my God. Rom. ix. 5. Christ—who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Col. ii. 9. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Col. i. 15. Who is the image of the invisible God; the first-born of every creature, for by him were all things created, &c. Heb. i. 3. Who being the brightness of his (the Father's) glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, &c. Acts x. 36. He is Lord of all. John ii. 25. He knew what was in man. John vi. 64. Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. John i. 4. In him was life. Matt. ix. 35. And Jesus went, &c. healing every sickness, and every disease among the people. Matt. xiv. 33. Then they that were in the ship came and worshiped him. John ix. 38. And he worshiped him. 2 Pet. iii. 18. To him be glory, both now and for ever. Amen. Rev. i. 6. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Rev. v. 12. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Rev. v. 13. And every creature, &c. heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Rev. vii. 10. Salvation unto our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Matt. xvi. 16. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Acts ix. 20. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. Heb. iv. 14. We have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. 1 John iv. 15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. John xx. 31. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. 1 John v. 5. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God. 1 John v. 10. 13. Rom. i. 3. 4. Rom. xiv. 10. We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. 2. Cor. v. 10.

3. *The testimony of Jesus Christ.*

Rev. i. 17. I am the first and the last. John viii. 58. Before Abraham was, I am. John x. 30. I and my Father are one. John v. 22, 23. For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. John xvii. 5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Matt. xxviii. 18. All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. John xvii. 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. John x. 18. I have power to lay it down (my life) and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. John v. 26. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. Matt. ix. 6. The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins. Matt. xviii. 20. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matt. xxviii. 20. Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Luke xxii. 69. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Matt. xxv. 31. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, &c. John xi. 25. I am the

resurrection and the life. John ix. 35. Dost thou believe on the Son of God? John iii. 16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John iii. 18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

4. *The testimony of God the Father.*

Heb. i. 8. Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.—i. 6. When he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him. Zech. xiii. 7. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts. Matt. xvii. 5. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.

How glorious and precious is this divine testimony concerning the sinner's friend? Let us carefully examine what truths it plainly exhibits for our faith and love.

1. We have here most plainly revealed to us, that our blessed Savior *really existed before he appeared on earth.* He was before Abraham. He was with the Father in the beginning, and possessed glory with him before the world was. He came down from heaven. God created the world by him, consequently he must have *really* and *actually* existed in the beginning, and not merely in the divine purpose.

2. Here also the eye of faith beholds him with admiring joy, "*God over all.*" As by him all things were made, so by him all things consist. His throne is to endure through all generations. On that throne of inconceivable glory he appears encircled with holy majesty, the "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

3. *He is an object of worship.* To him every knee must bow. Angels are commanded to worship him. His disciples prayed to him and worshiped him. To him they committed their departing spirits.

4. In the divine character of the Son of God, he is presented to a dying world as *the only name "by whom we must be saved."* In him alone we have eternal life, believing in him as "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Let us then, with grateful joy, set to our "seal that God is true," by receiving the testimony concerning his Son. Let us build our hope for eternity on this foundation which God himself hath laid, for "other foundation can no man lay." Let us look for the remission of sins only through

his blood; and by this find access into the most holy place. Let us confide in him as our Savior, and obey him as "King on the holy hill of Zion." Let us unite with the redeemed multitude in ascribing the glory of salvation "to him that sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb." Finally, let us, like holy Stephen, commit our departing spirits into the arms of his mercy, assured that the "eternal judgment" of the great day will soon confirm the following testimony: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

CHAPTER II.

Containing an examination of the divine testimony concerning the ORIGIN *of the highest and most glorious character of the* SON OF GOD.

1. *The testimony of the Prophets and Apostles.*

Col. i. 15—19. Who is the *image* of the invisible God, the *first-born* of every *creature;* for by him were all things created. &c.; for it *pleased the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell. Heb. 1 chap. God—hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom *he hath appointed* heir of all things, *by whom* also HE made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory, and the express *image* of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, &c. being *made* so much better than the angels, &c. And again, when he bringeth the *first begotten* into the world, *he saith*, and let all the angels of God worship him. Unto the *Son* he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *thy* God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. John i. 14. And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the *only begotten of the Father*, full of grace and truth. Rev. xix. 13. His name is called the *Word of God*. John iii. 31, 32. He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what *he hath seen and heard* that he testifieth. 34. For he whom *God hath sent* speaketh the words of God: For God *giveth* not the spirit by measure unto him. 35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath *given*

all things into his hand. 1 Cor. xi. 3. The *head* of Christ is God. Rev. i. 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God *gave unto him.* Acts ii. 22. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which *God did by him*, &c. Acts x. 38. *God anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, &c.; for *God was with him.* 1 Peter i. 22.—God that raised him up from the dead, and *gave* him glory. Rom. ii. 16.—God shall judge the secrets of men BY Jesus Christ. Acts x. 42.—*Ordained* of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. Acts xvii. 31.

2. *The testimony of Jesus Christ.*

Rev. 3. 14. These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, *the beginning of the creation of God.* John vi. 57.—I live *by the Father.* v. 26. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he *given* to the Son to have life in himself, and hath *given him authority* to execute judgment, &c. Matt. xi. 27. All things are *delivered* unto me of my Father. xxviii. 18. All power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth. John xvii. 2. As thou hast *given* him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast *given* him. John x. 18. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I *received of my Father.* John v. 19. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son *can do nothing of himself.* John xiv. 10. The Father, that dwelleth in me, *he doeth the works.* John v. 22. For the Father judgeth no man; but hath *committed* all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. John xvii. 24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory *which thou hast given me:* For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. John xvii. 5. And now, O Father, *glorify thou me* with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. John viii. 26.—He that *sent me* is true; and I speak to the world those things which *I have heard of him.* John xii. 49. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he *gave me a commandment* what I should say, and what I should speak. John vii. 16. My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. John vi. 38. For I came down from heaven, *not to do mine own will*, but the will of him that sent me. Luke xxii. 29. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath *appointed*

unto me. Matt. xii. 28. But if I cast out devils *by the Spirit of God*, &c.

3. *The testimony of God the Father.*

Ps. lxxxix. 19. Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty. 25. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. 26. He shall cry unto me, thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. 27. Also I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth. Ps. ii. 7. Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. Isa. xlii. 1. 6. Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light to the Gentiles. Heb. i. 6—9. And again, when he bringeth in the *first begotten* into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him.—Unto the *Son* he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even *thy* God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy *fellows.*

Guided by the light of heavenly truth, let us now proceed to the consideration of the following important and highly interesting question. Is Jesus Christ called God, is he worshiped, has he created the universe, is he preserver and Savior and King and Judge, as the *self-existent, independent, omnipotent and only true God;* or as the *Son of God, begotten, upheld, exalted and glorified by the Father?*

Revelation alone must answer this question. Let no conclusion of imperfect reason, no false inferences of our erring minds, no prejudice in favor of our long cherished systems, prevent our receiving the divine testimony on this subject.

Let us first consider *in what sense* the scriptures of truth apply the title of God, to Jesus Christ.

That the mere application of this title to Christ, does not prove him to be the self-existent Deity, is evident from the 82d Psalm, where we find it applied to earthly rulers. See also Exod. vii. 1. 22 chap. 28 verse. John x. 35. From Heb. i. 8. it is evident that it is as the *begotten* Son, that he is called God. "Unto the *Son* he saith, thy throne, O God," &c. And in the very next verse, and in immediate connexion, the same person who is called God, is plainly

represented as having a God. "Therefore God, *even thy God*," &c. See also John xx. 17. Rev. iii. 12. Here then, the scripture, which is its own best interpreter, plainly teaches us that he is not called God *in the highest sense;* for the supreme Deity can neither be *begotten* nor *have a God.*

John i. 1. In this passage of divine truth, it is declared that the Word, who is called God, "*was with God.*" Here also, the holy scripture teaches us, that in whatever sense the Word is called God, he is a distinct being from the supreme God, otherwise he could not be said to be *with God.* Now as it is no where expressly revealed that the Word or Son is "the same numerical essence," or the same being as the Father, how can the passage bear such a construction? We have scripture authority for saying, that the term God is sometimes used in an inferior or figurative sense; but have we any authority from scripture or reason for saying, that the supreme God *was with the* supreme God? "To what class of men could John address the asseveration," that the supreme God was with himself?—"Where did these singular heretics suppose" the supreme God was, except with himself? Is there any intelligible idea in the proposition, that the same numerical essence was with the same numerical essence? Or can we conceive that one supreme God was with another supreme God?

The scriptures of truth afford more light on this important text. In John xvii. 5, our dear Redeemer prays, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Here it is just as evident that the glory of the Word cannot be the glory of the supreme Deity, as that supreme Deity cannot be a subject of prayer. This cannot be considered the prayer of his human nature, for that nature, so far from enjoying glory "*before the world was*," did not then exist. Our Savior evidently refers to the state of which John wrote, John i. 1. The same nature prays as then existed, to be restored to the same glorious condition. Does not this conclusively prove that the Son is dependent on the Father, for the highest glory he possesses?

Rev. xix. 13. Here we are instructed that the Word is "the Word *of God.*" Is it not the design of the Spirit of truth to teach us, by this term, that the Son is the *medium* of communication or manifestation of all the glory of God, (in creation, providence and redemption,) to his intelligent

creatures? "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Rom. ix. 5. Christ—who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Here our precious Redeemer is again called God, over all God, which is expressive of his high authority and dominion. Compare this passage with Ps. xlv. 6. where Jesus is called God on the throne of the mediatorial kingdom. In the view of this glorious character, believers love and adore him. But whether he is possessed of this dominion, of *independent right*, or by the *pleasure and appointment* of the Father, the scriptures must determine. Dan. vii. 13, 14. I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was *given* him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Matt. xxviii. 18. All power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth. John xvii. 2. As thou hast *given* him power over all flesh, &c. Luke xxii. 29. I *appoint* unto you a kingdom as my Father hath *appointed* unto me. Ps. ii. 6. 8. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. Ask of me and *I shall give thee* the heathen for thine inheritance, &c. Acts v. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. Here we are taught that Jesus Christ executes the high offices of Prince and Savior; that he gives repentance and forgives sin, *all by the power and appointment of the Father.*

To be over all, and to have all things under him, are synonymous expressions. "But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him." 1 Cor. 15, 27. He is therefore dependent on another being, even the Father, for having all things under him, or being "over all."

The term "fellow," in Zech. xiii. 7, has been supposed to denote perfect equality. Let Heb. i. 9, be considered. Here the Son of God is said to have been anointed with the oil of gladness above his "*fellows.*" Whether the term here means those "many brethren" of whom he is "the first born," or the angels of heaven, it cannot mean *perfect equality*, for the Son has "a more excellent name" than

either. The primary meaning of the word fellow, is not equal, but companion.

If, then, the blessed God hath been pleased to glorify his only begotten and well beloved Son, and to accomplish his eternal purposes of wisdom and love, by setting him at his own right hand on the throne of the universe; is it not perfectly consistent with such a design, that Jesus Christ should be distinguished with adequate titles of dignity and glory? If they were called Gods to whom the word of God came; if even a material monument of the Lord's goodness may be called by the name of Jehovah, Exod. xvii. 15, are we surprised to find the Son (who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the very image of the invisible God,) called God, over all God, &c.? These appellations are perfectly appropriate. He *is* over all Ruler or God. He *is* Lord of all, for to this pre-eminence "God hath highly exalted him." Phil. ii. 9.

It is the delightful privilege of the redeemed, both in heaven and on earth, to ascribe "glory and dominion for ever," "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Let us examine the divine testimony respecting this holy worship. On *what account* is it offered to the Lamb? John v. 22, 23. For the Father judgeth no man; but hath *committed* all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. I think it must be admitted, that no passage can be found which expresses higher honor to the Son than this. And it is very remarkable that this passage which has been so often quoted as proof of the Son's supreme deity, itself contains proof to the contrary. The reason why we are to honor the Son as we do the Father, is here assigned. Is it because he is "the same numerical essence?" No, but because the Father "hath *committed* all judgment" unto him. Unless then, we say, that we honor the Father because of authority *committed* to him, we must acknowledge that this very passage teaches us that we do not honor the Son *in all respects* as we do the Father.

Phil. ii. 9—11. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and *given* him a name which is above every name, that at (or in) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, *to the glory of God the Father.* How evident it is from this text, and the precious truth in its con-

nection, that the Son of God is worshiped, not as supreme Jehovah, but on account of his great humiliation and perfect accomplishment of the mediatorial work: and that this worship is *to the glory of God the Father.*

Rev. i. 5, 6. In this passage he is worshiped because he has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father. Rev. v. 12. As the Lamb that was slain. Matt. xiv. 33. His disciples worshiped him as the *Son of God.* Rev. v. 13. and vii. 10. He is worshiped in *distinction* from him that sitteth on the throne.

Shall we then, set in opposition to the divine testimony, the dictates of fallible reason, and say it is idolatry to worship him in distinction from "the only true God, who sitteth on the throne? Is it then idolatry to worship him *to the glory of God the Father*, and because the Father commands it? Shall we charge the worshipers in heaven with idolatry? It is remarkable that many Unitarians and Trinitarians, have wandered so far from what appears to be the truth, as to meet at the same point of error. Both refuse to imitate the heavenly worshipers, who worship the Lamb *in distinction* from the "most high God" who sitteth upon the throne.

The worship of the Son of God, has been supposed by some to be inconsistent with the declaration of Jehovah, "My glory will I not give to another." But what is the glory of Jehovah? Is it not the glory of *underived and independent existence?* Is it not the glory of possessing in himself *infinite perfection;* and of being, consequently, the SUPREME object of the love, confidence, and worship of all intelligences? If, then, the Father requires us to worship the Son, who is a *distinct person*, as the self-existent and independent Jehovah, it appears that *he has given his glory to another.* But if he requires us to honor and worship him *on account of all judgment or authority being* COMMITTED *to him by the Father;* and if he requires us to worship the Son "*to the glory of the Father*," it is evident that he has *not* given his glory to another.

It is admitted that it would be idolatry to worship two or more distinct persons or beings, considering them as supreme and *in all respects equal*, for this would be worshiping two or more supreme Gods. There are many pious Trinitarians who profess to believe the divine unity, who, nevertheless, worship *three distinct equal persons.* I do humbly and seriously suggest for their candid and solemn

consideration, whether this is consistent with their belief of the unity of God? And whether they can find a single precept or example for such worship in the scriptures of truth? I beseech them to reflect, whether it is possible for them, when they are worshiping, to have an idea of *three distinct equal persons*, without having an idea of *three distinct equal beings?* Is it possible for any one to conceive of "him that sitteth on the throne," as supreme God, and of him who is at the right hand of him who sitteth on the throne, as supreme God, without conceiving of *two supreme Gods?*

The repetition of the term Holy, as in Isa. vi. 3. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts," has been thought by some to denote the doctrine of the Trinity. It is evident, however, that such repetition is *only significant of the importance of the subject.* Thus we read in Jer. xxii. 29. O earth, earth, earth, &c. And Ezek. xxi. 27. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, &c. Indeed, it is the practice of the Hebrews to this day, to say over some of their prayers or praises three times. They have no faith in the doctrine of the Trinity.

"The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Whether this affords proof of supreme deity or not depends upon the question, whether this power was or was not derived from the Father? Acts v. 31, answers this question. "Him *hath God exalted with his right hand* to be a Prince and a Savior for to give repentance to Israel and *forgiveness of sins.*"

Matthew xxviii. 19.—"Baptizing them," &c.

This passage, in the Greek, does not express the idea *by the authority of*, as in our translation; it is εις *into*, not εν *in* the Name of the Father, &c.; i. e. into the truth, or into a profession of the truth, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. What that truth is must be learned from other divine testimony. The passage itself does not declare, or necessarily imply, that the three are one God, or that they are three persons, or that they are equal.

It has been often asked, How can Jesus be present with his assembled disciples according to his promise, Matt. xviii. 20, except he is the omnipresent Jehovah? If we consider that the spirit is given him *without measure* by the Father, John iii. 34, we may easily conceive of his being spiritually present, not only in all parts of this atom of a world, but in all parts of the created universe. As the Son of God cast out devils *by the Spirit of God*, Matt. xii. 28,

so by the same Spirit, he is present with all true worshipers. John iii. 34, however teaches us that he is not infinite in himself, for if he was, he surely could not need any thing to be *given* him by another.

"God is a Spirit," the *only* "eternal Spirit." Consistently with this plain truth, we never find the Holy Spirit worshiped in distinction from the Father. If we did, we must either suppose *two eternal spirits*, or another spirit inferior to the Father. The following passage expresses an identity of the Father and the Spirit which is totally inconsistent with distinct personality. 1 Cor. ii. 11. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. The apostle indeed prayed, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the *communion of the Holy Ghost* be with you all. Amen. But if this is a proof of the Spirit being a *distinct person*, the prayer of John, Rev. i. 4, appears to afford equal proof that the Spirit consists of *seven* distinct persons. In Luke ii. 32, 35, we are taught that Jesus is the SON of the Highest, and the Holy Ghost is the POWER of the Highest.

The expressions "pour out," "shed forth," used in reference to the Spirit of God, are additional evidence that it is not a distinct person, for such expressions are inapplicable to a person. It is true that these gracious influences proceeding from our Father in heaven, are personified, and the personal pronouns used in the case. So wisdom is personified, Prov. 8 chap. Let us candidly consider whether there can exist an infinite, intelligent, independent and omnipotent person, for the worship of whom there is not a single precept or example in all the Bible?

The pious author of those Trinitarian doxologies, which are now preferred by many christian assemblies, to the inspired one of Rev. v. 13, confessed "that there is in scripture no express precept for addressing such worship to the Spirit, nor any example of it, and that therefore this ought not to be considered as a necessary part of christian worship; though he thought it lawful, because the Spirit or power of God is truly divine."* How *lawful* that worship is, for which we have neither precept or example in the *word of truth*, may be learned from "the faithful witness." John iv. 24. God is a spirit; and they that worship him

* Memoirs of Watts and Doddridge, p. 140, Boston edition.

must worship him in spirit and *in truth.* John xvii. 17. *Thy word is truth.*

Alas! that christians should sit down to sing God's truth, and then stand up to sing their own tradition!

Let us no longer worship according to "the precept of men," but unite in the holy anthem of celestial praise. Rev. v. 13. Blessing and honor and glory and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

To him that sits upon the throne,
Be honor, praise and glory given;
Loud hallelujahs to the Lamb,
By all on earth, and all in heaven.

CHAPTER III.

Containing an examination of the divine testimony respecting the NATURE AND ORIGIN *of those perfections by which the Son of God created, governs, saves, and judges the world.*

We have seen in Col. ii. 9, that in Jesus Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." A few verses before this, chap. i. 19, the inspired apostle informs us, "*it pleased the Father*, that in him should *all fulness dwell.*" Here then, the divine testimony teaches us that it is by *the pleasure of the Father*, that the Son possesses this divine fulness. It ought to be particularly observed, that this last passage is in immediate connexion with the 16th and 17th verses, which declare him to have created all things, and to be before all things. This must certainly refer to his *highest character.* It consequently teaches us, that he posesses his *highest and most glorious perfections* by the pleasure of the Father. The apostle represents even saints being "filled with all the fulness of God," Eph. iii. 19. This, indeed, must be understood as vastly inferior to the fulness which Christ possesses. The creation of the universe is ascribed to the Son. John i. iii. Col. i. 16, &c. But do the scriptures of truth teach us that he created all things by his own *independent* power, or that he was the glorious *agent* of "the only true God?" Eph. iii. 9.—God, who created all things BY Jesus Christ. Heb. i. 12. God—hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, BY whom also HE made the worlds.

These passages certainly teach us that it was by *the power of the Father*, that the Son created the worlds. His creating all things, therefore, affords no proof that he is omnipotent.

In Heb. i. 3. Jesus Christ is represented as "upholding all things by the word of his power." Certainly this must be in his *highest character*. Yet the apostle explains this by informing us that he was *made* so much better than the angels.

In Acts ii. 22, all the miracles which the Savior wrought on earth are ascribed to *the power of the Father*. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs which *God did by him* in the midst of you. In Matt. xxviii. 18, and John xvii. 2. All power in heaven and in earth is ascribed to Christ. Is not this descriptive of *the highest* power he possesses? Does he possess it *independently?* Let us hear and believe "the faithful witness." "All power is GIVEN unto me," &c. "As thou hast GIVEN him power over all flesh, that he should give *eternal life* to as many as thou hast given him." Here we are plainly taught that the whole power, by which the Son of God accomplishes the redemption of his church, is *given* him by the Father. Shall we then continue to say, that no *given* power, that nothing less than independent omnipotence can qualify him for such a work? Is not this to say, that the means divine wisdom employs for the redemption of the elect are *inadequate?*

My respected brother Stuart, remarking on the character of Christ as *Judge*,* observes, "*omnipresence* and *omniscience only* can qualify him for the duties of that station." He admits that, "he does indeed *act* as judge by delegated authority." Let John xvii. 2, be again considered. Does not the giving "eternal life to the elect," include his *judging them and the world?* Or, if this should be denied; does it require any *more* wisdom, or knowledge, or power to *judge the world*, than it does to give *eternal life* to his people? Most certainly it does not. Here, then, it obviously appears from the divine testimony, that he is not only appointed to "*act* as judge, by delegated authority," but that the very *qualification* by which he acts, not only in the single office of judging the world; but in the arduous and glorious work of *giving eternal life* to his sheep, is *given* him by the Father. I do not perceive how Mr. Stuart can

*Letters to Mr. Channing, 3d Edit. p. 97.

reconcile the above observation with the following in his Letters to Mr. Miller :* *"I can conceive it possible, that a derived being may have such an unlimited communication of power, and knowledge, and wisdom, that he may govern worlds."* He who *governs* worlds is surely competent to *judge* them.

We have seen from the words of the Lord, that our divine Redeemer is qualified for the important work appointed him, in respect to *wisdom* and *knowledge*. Col. ii. 3. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." John ii. 25. He knew what was in man. Rev. ii. 23. I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts.

He is worthy to take the book of the divine counsels, and to unloose the seals thereof. He only reveals to us, and to the powers of the heavenly places, the purposes of Jehovah, unfolding to our admiring view, the works of grace and love and holy vengeance of "the only true God." And how doth he obtain this knowledge of all things? What saith the scripture? "The Revelation of Jesus Christ *which God gave unto him.*" Rev. i. 1.

Titus iii. 4—6. But after that the kindness and love of *God our Savior* toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly THROUGH *Jesus Christ our Savior*. This passage, and many others, proves, that the Son saves us by the appointment and power of the Father. It also proves how erroneous that common idea is, that wherever the word *Savior* occurs in a text, the *Son of God* must be intended.

John viii. 26. He that sent me is true, and I speak to the world those things *which I have heard of him*. John xii. 49, 50. For I have not spoken of *myself*, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, &c. John iii. 31, 32. He that cometh from heaven is above all, and what he hath *seen and heard* that he testifieth.

It appears equally evident from "the oracles of God," that Jesus Christ will *judge the world*, by the power and appointment of the Father. Acts x. 42. It is he which was *ordained of God* to be the judge of quick and dead. Rom. ii. 16. God shall judge the secrets of men BY Jesus Christ. John v. 22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath *committed* all judgment to the Son.

* Page 92.

Jer. xxiii. 6. it is said of the Son of God, "and this is his name whereby he shall be called, the LORD our righteousness. Jer. xxiii. 16, it is said of Jerusalem, "this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the LORD our righteousnesss," not because either the Son or people of Jehovah are literally Jehovah, but because, in them, Jehovah is pleased to accomplish his gracious purpose of salvation. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself," &c. Even *places* where God displayed his power and goodness were called by his name. "Jehovah-jireh." "Jehovah-nissi."

When we contemplate the holy Son of God in the endearing character of the "one meditator between God and man," what a glory do we behold encircling him in all his offices!

As our PROPHET, he "spake as never man spake." His doctrine distilled as the dew. "Grace was poured into his lips." Psal. xlv. 2. Blesssed teacher! The knowledge thou dost impart is life to our souls. Oh, may we never turn away from "him that speaketh from heaven."

As our PRIEST, how precious is his offering and intercession! We have the "remission of sins through his blood." He "ever liveth to make intercession for us." He is "made higher than the heavens;" "a great high priest, Jesus the Son of God."

As our KING, he is "fairer than the children of men." He is "King of kings and Lord of lords." By the power of his grace he conquers the hearts of his chosen seed, and subjects them to his righteous government. O blessed Prince of peace! O precious reign of grace! He will present his redeemed church before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. He shall triumph over all his foes, for he must reign until all his enemies are put under his feet. Those who will not have him to reign over them he will punish "with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Then shall he "be glorified in his saints, and admired in them that believe."

Let it however be remembered, that it is the Father who is "the only true God," that has exalted him, and upholds him in this high station. Deut. xviii. 18. I will raise them up a *Prophet*, &c. As a *Priest* he is "*made* higher than the heavens." So Christ *glorified not himself* to be made an high priest; but HE that said unto him, thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. Heb. v. 5. Psal. ii. 6. Yet have I set my *King* upon my holy hill of Zion.

The case of Joseph, who appears to have been a striking type of Christ, may serve to illustrate, in some manner, the scriptural representation of the glorious dignity of the Son of God, and also his dependence on the Father for all his authority. Gen. xli. 39—44. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph—thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, see I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain abou this neck. And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had, and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

Such was the high authority with which Pharaoh invested Joseph: in consequence of which, he was, in a sense, honored even as they honored Pharaoh; for it was said to him, "Thou art even as Pharaoh;" Gen. xliv. 18. Joseph was exalted to the government of Egypt; and was indeed more actively ruler, than Pharaoh himself. Yet Pharaoh was greater than Joseph. From Pharaoh he derived all his dignity, and on his sovereign will he was dependent for all his authority. Pharaoh *governed* Egypt by Joseph. Pharaoh *saved* Egypt during the famine by Joseph. He gave him a name, said to signify a Savior, and commanded all to bow the knee to Joseph.

So "the eternal Spirit," who is and ever must be the alone God, creates, upholds, governs and saves by his Son, "whom he hath *appointed* heir of all things," whom he hath "*made* better than the angels;" and whom, on account of all judgment being *committed* to him, he requires us to honor even as we honor the Father. I have no idea that the case of Joseph, or any other, can present to the mind an adequate parallel of the incomparable Immanuel.

> "Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun, nor stars,
> "Nor heaven his full resemblance bears;
> "His beauties we can never trace,
> "Till we behold him face to face."

Far be it from us to rob the Savior of his true glory. Far be it from us to deny his own testimony. Let us not be found uniting with the Jews in charging "the

faithful witness," with advancing claims to a character he never assumed : a charge which Jesus himself immediately repelled in the plainest language. John v. 19. How delusive is the impression, that we are honoring the Son of God while we deny his own testimony ?

Let none, however, imagine, that we can have too exalted views of the sinner's friend, that we can adore him too highly, or love him too ardently, while in accordance with the inspired testimony, we behold him as " the *image* of the invisible God ; " and worship him " to the glory of God the Father." Let our minds expand to the utmost stretch of thought in the contemplation of his divine beauty and glorious dignity ; still our conceptions of his incomparable excellence will be vastly too limited and inadequate. Let our hearts glow with the most fervent love, and our bosoms heave with the warmest gratitude to his dear name, still we must acknowledge that our affections towards him bear no proportion to his charms or his love. With our highest notes of praise, we must mingle the sigh of lamentation, that we admire and love and praise him no more.

" Had we a thousand lives to give,
A thousand lives should all be thine."

CHAPTER IV.

Containing an examination of the divine testimony respecting the import of the term SON OF GOD, *and whether it is, or is not expressive of the* HIGHEST *character of our blessed Lord.*

It has long been a sentiment of very general belief in the christian church, that the terms *Son of God*, *only begotten Son of God*, are expressive of that divine relation to the Father in which his *highest character* consists. These terms are now considered by some, who are to be respected for their talents and piety, as referable to the humanity of Christ peculiarly begotten ; and not as importing his most exalted nature.

In relation to this interesting and important subject, we may consider the following truths derived from the divine testimony.

1. It is in the character of the SON OF GOD, that the Sa-

vior is presented to a lost world, as the great object of faith, and with the belief of this truth salvation is connected.

2. It is in this character, he is an object of worship.

3. Jesus Christ during his ministry on earth never claimed a higher title.

4. The highest title ever given him in the scriptures of truth, even that of God, is given to him as the *Son of God*.

If these propositions are clearly supported by the word of God, can we possibly avoid the conclusion, that the terms under consideration import the highest character of our Redeemer?

1. That "the Lord from heaven," is presented to a perishing world as the great and glorious *object of faith* in the character of the SON OF GOD, with the belief of which truth salvation is connected, appears from the following passages. Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5. John i. 34. iii. 18. 36. vi. 69. ix. 35. xi. 27. Acts viii. 37. ix. 20. Rom. i. 4. 1 John iv. 15., &c.

2. That it is in this character he is worshiped, plainly appears from Heb. i. 6. When he bringeth in the *first begotten* into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him. See also John v. 23. Matt. xiv. 33. John ix. 35. 38.

3. No passage can be found in which "the faithful witness" ever claimed a higher title. On this high claim, the charge of blasphemy by his opposers was founded. John x. 36. This claim excited their utmost rage. John v. 18.

4. That it is as the SON OF GOD on the throne of the mediatorial kingdom, he is called *God*, is evident from Heb. i. 8. Ps. xlv. 6. But unto the *Son*, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, &c.

The first chapter to the Hebrews illustrates this important truth. It is manifestly the design of the inspired apostle in this chapter, to set forth our adorable Redeemer in his highest dignity and most glorious character. He represents him, verse 2, as the maker of the worlds. Ver. 3. as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. Ver. 4. as being much better than the angels. Ver. 6. as the object of their worship. And ver. 8. as God. But it appears from verses 2 and 3, that it was in the character of *Son* that he made the worlds. If, then, his creating the world, if his being "the express image" of the invisible God, denote his divine nature, the title of Son must denote the same. Why is he made so much better than the angels? Because he hath by inher-

itance obtained a more excellent name than they. But what is this excellent name? It is the *Son of God*. This is evident from ver. 5. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my *Son*, &c. But if this name is applicable only to his humanity, it must rather signify that he was made "*a little lower than the angels*;" and the inspired apostle appears wholly to have failed in his proof, ver. 5, which he evidently considers as conclusive.

Mr. Fuller in his essay on this subject, justly remarks, "The glory of the *only begotten of the Father*, and the glory of the *Word*, are used as convertible terms, as being the same: but the latter is allowed to denote the divine person of Christ, antecedent to his being made flesh; the same therefore must be true of the former. *The word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory*; that is, the glory of the Word, *the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*. John i. 14."

John iii. 16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his *only begotten Son*, &c. Here the apostle exhibits to us the great love of the giver, by setting forth the excellence of the gift. But all this excellence is comprised in the phrase, "*his only begotten Son*." This phrase must, therefore, include the *highest character* of our blessed Redeemer, or it is totally inadequate for the apostle's purpose, to set forth the amazing love of God towards us in "his unspeakable gift."

Heb. iv. 14.—We have a *great high priest*, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the *Son of God*. "The blood of Jesus Christ *his Son* cleanseth us from all sin." If, then, there is any divinity in his priesthood, to give virtue to his sacrifice and intercession, that divinity is in the name of the *Son of God*.

So also, when he is exalted as King on the holy hill of Zion, the decree is declared, "Thou art my *Son*," &c. And when we are required to be reconciled to his government, we are commanded to "kiss the *Son*." Psalm ii. 7. 12.

John xvii. 5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. The obvious truth in this passage is, that the *Son* possessed glory with the Father "before the world was," and, consequently, that these relations then subsisted. But if the term "*Son of God*," is not expressive of the Redeemer's *highest character*, it follows that the Son of God, so far from possessing glory with with the Father before the world was, has not yet existed two thousand years!

It is remarked by the respected author before quoted, that "God is frequently said to have *sent* his Son into the world. John vii. 18. x. 36. 1 John iv. 9, 10. But this implies that he was his Son antecedent to his being sent. To suppose otherwise, is no less absurd than supposing that when Christ is said to have sent forth his twelve disciples, they were not disciples, but in consequence of his sending them, or of some preparation pertaining to their mission." "Moreover, to say that *God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh*, is equal to saying, that the Son of God assumed human nature: he must therefore have been the Son of God before his incarnation. Christ is called the Son of God antecedent to his being *manifested to destroy the works of the devil:* but he was manifested to destroy the works of the devil by taking upon him human nature: consequently he was the Son of God antecedent to the human nature being assumed."

"It has been frequently suggested, that the ground of Christ's sonship is given us in Luke i. 35, and is no other than his miraculous conception. It is true that our Lord was miraculously conceived of the Holy Spirit, and that such a conception was peculiar to him; but it does not follow, that by this he became the *Son, or only begotten Son of God.* Nor does the passage in question prove any such thing. It may be a reason given why Christ is *called* the Son of God; but not why he *is* so. Christ is called the Son of God as raised from the dead, and as exalted at the right hand of God. Acts xiii. 33. Heb. i. 4, 5. Did he then become the Son of God by these events? This is impossible; for sonship is not a progressive matter. If it arose from his miraculous conception, it could not for that reason arise from his resurrection or exaltation: and so on the other hand, if it arose from his resurrection, or exaltation, it could not proceed from his miraculous conception. But if each be understood of his being hereby *proved, acknowledged*, or, as the scriptures express it, '*declared* to be the Son of God with power,' all is easy and consistent."

Rom. i. 3, 4, is an instructive passage. Our Lord was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness," &c. It is admitted by learned Trinitarians that "it is not the third person in the Trinity that is referred to here." (See Barnes, Poole, &c. on the passage.) It is Christ's spirit in contrast with his body. He was of the seed of David in respect to his flesh or body. Observe,

not according to his flesh and *human soul*, but simply in respect to his *flesh, or body*. "A body, (not body *and soul*) hast thou prepared me." "The Word was made flesh," not flesh *and soul*. But "according," or, in respect, to his spirit, he was "the SON OF GOD." The passage proves that he was so *before* his incarnation. Mr. Barnes observes, "The expression *according to the spirit of holiness* does not indeed of itself imply divinity. It denotes that *holy* and more *exalted nature* which he possessed as distinguished from the human." The distinction, however, in the passage, is not between *two spirits* of different natures, but simply between the nature and origin of his one holy spirit and the nature and origin of that flesh or body which that spirit assumed.*

We have, then, sufficient proof from the divine testimony, that the term Son of God is expressive of the highest character of our Savior. The reflecting reader will discern that we have equal proof that he is, in his highest nature, "the *only begotten* of the Father," and must, therefore, be necessarily *dependent* on him for all things, agreeably to Christ's own words; "all things are *delivered* unto me of my Father." Mr. Fuller, although a Trinitarian,

* My esteemed brother Barnes remarks, on Rom. i. 4. "The natural idea of the term Son of God therefore is, that he sustained a relation to God in his nature which implied more than was human or angelic; which implied *equality* with God." That the terms "THE Son of God" and "ONLY begotten," imply a nature superior to the human and angelic, is obvious. But how does it follow that his nature must be that of supreme deity? Is it impossible for God to create or beget any intelligent being of a higher nature than that of the angelic? Mr. B. adds "this idea (i. e. of *equality*) was naturally suggested to the Jews by his calling God his Father, John v. 18." Whether their inference was *natural* or not it was certainly *untrue*, "the faithful witness" himself being judge. for Jesus Christ immediately repudiated their inferential accusation by the asseveration, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son *can do nothing of himself*," &c. Let me ask that respected and intelligent author whether the term *Son* does not "naturally" suggest the idea of "*begotten?*" Is not the idea of *begotten* inseparable from the idea of *Son*? Do not the Scriptures of truth plainly and positively declare that Jesus Christ, *as the Son of God*, is BEGOTTEN? Once more permit me to ask, does not the term begotten naturally suggest the idea of *derivation?* It is admitted that the nature of Jehovah is *underived* and *unbegotten*. How then can a term which naturally suggests the idea of *derivation* naturally suggest the idea of *self-existence?* If it cannot, (as is obvious to common sense,) it cannot naturally suggest the idea of perfect "equality" with God. The manifest truth is, that the term, "The only begotten Son of God," naturally suggests, to every unbiased mind, the idea of a distinct being from the alone God; dependent upon him for his existence, but a partaker of the divine nature in a peculiar and pre-eminent manner and degree.

acknowledged in the conclusion of his essay on the Son-ship of Christ, that "in the order of nature, the Father must have existed *before the Son.*"* He indeed supposed the Son to be "properly eternal," as well as the Father. But to reconcile this idea with the above concession, is, to me at least, absolutely impossible.

Is this, with any of us a subject of mere speculation?—God forbid! In this name, my brethren, is concentrated all the glory of God ever viewed by mortal minds. In this name centers all our hope, and peace, and joy. It is this dear name that draws forth our souls to Jehovah, in wonder, love and praise. This is the blest name that comprises all those glorious "things the angels desire to look into." And it is in the knowledge, love and adoration of this name that the saints shall be "filled with all the fulness of God."

"Oh, may I live to reach the place,
Where he unveils his lovely face;
Where all his beauties you behold,
And sing his name to harps of gold."

CHAPTER V.

Containing an examination of the divine testimony concerning Jesus Christ, as the OBJECT OF FAITH.

It is undoubtedly our duty and privilege to believe *every part* of the divine record respecting the Son of God. But we are particularly to observe in what character he is presented to a lost world as the *object of faith*, and what we are required to believe in order to be saved.

John iii. 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his *only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. 18. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed *in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* 36. He that believeth *on the Son* hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the *Son* shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him. John ix. 35. Jesus—said unto him, dost thou believe on the *Son of God?* Acts viii. 37. I be-

* Dialogues, Letters and Essays, on various subjects, page 134 Hartford edition.

lieve that Jesus Christ is the *Son of God.* Acts ix. 20. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the *Son of God.* John xx. 31. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the *Son of God;* and that believing ye might have life through his name. 1 John iv. 15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the *Son of God*, God dwelleth in him and he in God. "These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the *Son of God*, that ye may know that ye have eternal life; and that ye may believe *on the name of the Son of God.*" Is it not a truth, shining with peculiar luster in the divine word, that Jesus Christ is presented to a perishing world as the *grand object of faith*, in the character of the Son of God?

When the heavens are opened, that the character of the Savior may be announced by the Majesty on high to a perishing world, what do we hear? This is the second person of the adorable Trinity? This is the supreme God? No; but, "this is *my beloved Son*, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." And what did the blessed Ambassador of peace require? "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" This great truth was indeed the dividing line between his disciples and the world. The former believed, and were saved; the latter denied, and perished. As Jesus never *claimed* a higher character than this; he never required his disciples to *believe* that he possessed any higher character. It was the spiritual revelation of this great truth to the apostle Peter that rendered him blessed. And it was the confession, not that Jesus was the supreme God, or the second in a Trinity of equal persons; but, "*thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,*" which received the benediction of his Lord. Matt. xvi. 16, 17.

Shall we then be dissatisfied with a confession which the Savior himself approved? Shall we add to the divine testimony? Or shall we contradict that testimony and say, whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the *Son of God*, God doth not dwell in him and he in God, unless he doth also confess that Jesus Christ is that *very God* whose *Son* he is declared to be?

It is indeed important to observe, that true and saving faith in the *character of the Son of God*, implies a holy belief of his testimony respecting the perfections of God, the purity and reasonableness of his Law; the exceeding sinfulness of man as a rebel against the divine government; the way of salvation, through the perfect obedience of Jesus

Christ unto death; and the necessity of the fruits of holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

Awful is the delusion, and dreadful will be the doom of all those who rest in a *mere profession* of the truth, that Jesus is the Son of God. Their condemnation is already declared. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: For *thy heart is not right in the sight of God.*" Acts viii. 21.

If, then, we admit that we are required to believe in the *highest character* of the Savior, in order to be saved by him; we must admit that the term Son of God, in that peculiar sense in which it is applied to Christ, is expressive of that character.

CHAPTER VI.

Containing an examination of the divine testimony concerning the Son of God as a DISTINCT BEING *from the Father.*

It is indeed revealed that Christ and his Father are one. John v. 30. But it is no where revealed that the Father and Son are *one being.* In the very next verse preceding the declaration, "I and my Father are one," Jesus said, "My Father—is greater than all." Jesus also prayed, John xvii. 21, that his disciples "may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us."

Do not all those passages which declare that Christ "*came down from heaven;*" "*from God;*" that the Father *sent* him; evidently imply that he was a *distinct being* in that very highest character in which only he existed "with God" in heaven, before he "came down from heaven?" If the Spirit of truth has used the language of mortals, in the sense it is invariably used and understood by mortals; can these passages fail to produce the conviction, that he who "came down from heaven," "*from God,*" who was *sent by the Father*, was, and is a distinct being from the Father who sent him? Is it possible to conceive of the *Son* coming down from heaven, rather than the *Father*, if they are both "the same numerical essence?" Or, is it possible to conceive of the Word being "made flesh," rather than the Father, if we conceive of both as one being?

It has been suggested by a late able writer, that the pas-

sages which speak of God's *sending* his Son, &c. are to be understood as referring to the Father's sending him *after he was born of the virgin*, to execute the mediatorial office. The scriptural representation is, that the Father sent him "*into the world.*" John iii. 17, &c. Besides, if the opinion of that writer is correct, that Christ, as the *Son of God*, did not exist previous to the incarnation; we certainly must expect never to read of any character inferior to the supreme God *coming* "*down from heaven.*"

Let us now attend to "the faithful witness." John vi. 38. For I came *down from heaven*, not to do *mine own will*, but the will of him that sent me. John vi. 33. For the bread of God is he which *cometh down from heaven*, and giveth life unto the world. John viii. 42. I proceeded forth, and came from God; *neither came I of myself, but he sent me.* John xiii. 3. Jesus knowing that the Father had *given* all things into his hands, and that he was *come from God*, and went to God. John xvi. 28. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world and go to the Father. Well did his disciples say, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb."

How manifest from these words of the disciples, is the truth, that they were not Trinitarians. Had they understood our Lord to say, that "the same numerical essence" came forth from "the same numerical essence," would they have said, "Lo, now speakest thou *plainly*," &c.? Must they not have said, as Trinitarians say, Thou speakest *an incomprehensible mystery?*

Heb. x. 5. Wherefore, when he *cometh into the world*, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a BODY hast thou prepared me, &c.* 7. Then said I, Lo, I

* A BODY hast thou prepared me." Not a body and *another spirit or soul.* "The Word was made flesh." This is the divine testimony on this important subject. The common opinion, that the Son of God took another "reasonable soul" is sustained by no declaration of the Bible. "The first born of every creature," the "first begotten" was a spirit, "the image of the invisible God." This spirit, or Word, was made flesh, i. e. united to the body "prepared" for him, and, in connection therewith, humbled himself, was "made like unto his brethren." He became susceptible of our feelings and infirmities, was tempted in all points as we are, but without sin, that he might know how to succor them that are tempted. That it was possible for the Son of God incarnate thus to humble himself and to be qualified to sympathize with us, as our faithful High Priest, without assuming an additional spirit of the human nature; and that the assumption of a human body in connection with such humiliation of spirit furnishes adequate ground for his being called man, the Son of man, &c. no one can reasonably deny.

come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) *to do thy will, O God.* How plain and forcible is this divine testimony! Is not the last quoted declaration of Christ, represented as being *previous* to his actually being in the flesh? Was it not the declaration of the *Word* that "was with God," and "was made flesh?" And is it not the language of *inferiority and subjection?* Here are *two distinct wills* spoken of *before the incarnation.* The will of the *Son*, in subjection to the will of the *Father.* Could the "Word" in truth say, "*I come* to do *thy will*, O God," rather than his own: or could he afterwards say, "I *came down from heaven*, not to do mine own will," if his will was *the same numerical will* with that of the Father? Surely, then, we are plainly taught in the unerring word of truth, that he who came down from heaven to do the will of God, was and is, in his highest character, a *distinct being* from him whose will he voluntarily came to do.

John xvii. 5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Is not the glory, which Christ here prayed for, and for which, consequently, he acknowledges his dependence on the Father, the glory of his *highest nature?* This is certainly the case; for in his highest nature only did he exist "before the world was." But if the Word was *ever* dependent on the Father for his highest glory, he must have been *always* dependent; for supreme independence is *immutable.* This prayer of Jesus Christ, therefore, proves that the Word is a *distinct being* from the Father. After this prayer was answered, and Jesus glorified with the same glory he had with the Father before the world was, he is still distinguished from God in the following passages: Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. xi. 3. 1 Thes. iii. 11. 2 Thes. iii. 5. ii. 16, &c.

2 Cor. viii. 9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though *he was rich*, yet for your sakes *he became poor*, &c. Here the inspired apostle refers to the glory of the Son of God before he was made flesh. Moved with compassion for us, he laid aside this glory; "*he became poor.*" Surely this cannot, in any sense, be applicable to the *immutable* Jehovah.

1 Cor. viii. 6. But to us there is but ONE GOD, THE FATHER, *of* whom are all things, and we in him; and *one Lord Jesus Christ*, BY whom are all things, and we by him. Is it possible for any language to prove more explicitly that there is no trinity of persons in the one God, than this? Here we are plainly taught, not only that there

is but one God, but that this one God is "THE FATHER." Alas! we have still to say with the apostle, "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge;" for some with conscience say to us, the Father alone, is not the one God. The one God, is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here, then, are *two different testimonies* concerning the only living and true God. And which shall we believe? The one inspired by the Holy Ghost; or that which is declared by fallible men? Is there a single passage of scripture which declares that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God? Or that there are three persons in the Godhead? Or that the Father alone is not the one God? If the doctrine of the Trinity were true, should we not find it clearly declared, in at least one passage? The text in 1 John v. 7. (if it were not an interpolation,) does not declare either expressly or implicitly, that the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost are one God, or one being, or one person, or three persons: but simply "these three are one." In *what sense* they are one, must certainly be determined by other passages of scripture. How plainly is the one Lord Jesus Christ, "BY whom are all things," distinguished from the one God, "OF whom are all things." And how perfectly does this harmonize with other parts of the divine testimony. "God who created all things BY Jesus Christ." Eph. iii. 9. By him he saves sinners, and manifests the glory of his grace, "to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places." Eph. iii. 10. By him he will judge the world. Acts xvii. 31. Eph. iv. 5, 6. Here again, the "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all," is distinguished from the "one Lord."

Col. i. 15, 16. Who is the *image* of the invisible God, *the first born of every creature;* for by him were all things created, &c. Christ Jesus was the *image* of God, in his *highest nature*, for as such he created the world. Does not this expression teach us that he is a distinct being from the Father? Would the declaration, that a being is *the image of himself*, convey any intelligible idea to the mind? Is the word ever so used? Is not every image a representation of *a distinct object?* Is it not the likeness of *another thing?* If the scriptures revealed that the Son is the invisible God, would the apostle have said, he is the *image or likeness* of the invisible God? When one person bears a striking resemblance to another, we sometimes say, he who has seen one has seen the other. So did our Savior say, "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;" and with the greatest propriety; for "God who commanded the

light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of his glory *in the face of Jesus Christ.*"

"*The first born of every creature.*" The apostle proves that the Son of God is "the first born of every creature," by his creating all things. His argument is conclusive; for if "God — created all things by Jesus Christ," Jesus Christ must have existed "before all things." The passage also proves that he was the first born of every creature, *when* he created all things, otherwise, the latter could be no proof of the former. If we refer the phrase "first born of every creature," to his *humanity*, it makes the apostle argue very absurdly, that Jesus Christ is a man because he made all things. It is conceived that every unbiased mind must perceive that the apostle has as much reference to the highest nature of Christ, when he declares him to be *the first born of every creature*, as when he declares, that "by him were all things created." And we may as well say, it was his humanity that created all things, as to say, it was his humanity that was the first born of every creature. When it is said, that by him *all things* were created, it is manifest that he himself is excepted, who is "*the only begotten* of the Father," and "the beginning of the creation of God." Rev. iii. 14.

John xvii. 3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, *the only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Does not "the faithful witness" here plainly distinguish between himself, and "the only true God?" If Jesus Christ is the only true God, and man in one person, has he in this passage borne witness to the *truth?* Jude 4. Denying the *only Lord God*, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Here also our Savior is distinguished from the *only* Lord God. John vii. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. John xiv. 1. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. Rom. i. 7. Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Titus ii. 13. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ. The scriptures assure us that the second coming of Christ will be attended with the manifestation of the "*glory of his Father*," as well as the glory of the Son, and of the holy angels. Matt. xvi. 27. Rom. xvi. 27. To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. Heb. xii. 23, 24. To God the judge of all — and to Jesus the meditator, &c. 1 Tim. ii. 5. For there is one God, and one meditator *be-*

tween God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Rev. i. 9. For the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Rev. v. 13. Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. If Jesus Christ or the Lamb, is the very same being that sitteth upon the throne, is not the last clause superfluous and without meaning? Rev. xix. 13—16. Here our Savior is called the "Word of God," the "King of kings and Lord of lords." Are not these titles descriptive of his *very highest character?* Yet this King of kings and Lord of lords; this Word of God is plainly distinguished in the 15th verse, from the "ALMIGHTY GOD." While we give to the Son of God the glory due to his name; let us receive his own testimony, that the Father is "the only true God;" "for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

CHAPTER VII.

Containing an examination of the divine testimony respecting the INFERIORITY *of the highest character of the Son to that of the Father.*

John xiv. 28. My Father is greater than I. The views of some of our dear christian brethren oblige them to consider this declaration as referring to the mediatorial character of Jesus Christ, in distinction from his highest nature. This is conceding that Jesus Christ, *as mediator*, is not the supreme God; consequently, the argument, that he must be the supreme God in order to be *a competent mediator*, and to make *an adequate atonement*, is given up. Let it, however, be seriously considered, whether Jesus Christ could in truth say this, if he is supreme God and man in *one person.* Must not the pronoun I, in reference to that one person, necessarily include *all the attributes* of that *one person*, if Jesus Christ makes no distinction here between one nature and another, nor between a lower and higher character? The connection of the passage, clearly shows, that our Savior here spoke in reference to his *highest* character. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto my Father, for my Father is greater than I." Does not Jesus here teach his disciples, that they ought to rejoice because he was going to enjoy a happier state, and that his felicity in the society of his Father, would arise from *the superior glory of the Father?* Does not the connexion plainly teach, that the Father would be greater

than the Son *in that state to which he was going?* If we do not admit this, the whole force and propriety of the passage is destroyed. If it is admitted, it proves the *inferiority* of the Son, in his *highest nature;* for as certainly as his prayer was answered, John xvii. 5. he was immediately glorified with the glory he had with the Father "*before the world was*," which was the glory of his divine nature.

John x. 27—29. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. If Jesus Christ is the supreme God, could he add anything to this declaration to show the perfect and eternal security of his sheep? Yet he adds, "My Father which *gave* them to me, *is greater than all;* and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Is it not in his *highest nature and character* that the Son of God gives his sheep eternal life? And does he not in the most unequivocal manner testify, that he is in *that nature and character* inferior to the Father? If, however, we suppose Jesus Christ *did not* here speak of himself in his highest nature, (for which supposition I cannot perceive the least shadow of evidence,) still according to the doctrine of the Trinity, he could not say, "My *Father* — is greater than *all;* for, according to that doctrine, the Father is neither greater than the Word, or the Holy Spirit, who are considered *distinct persons* from him.

John v. 17—23. Here we find the unbelieving Jews charging the holy Jesus with "making himself equal with God," because he said, "that God was his Father." Did Jesus Christ admit their inference to be a just one? Let us again hear "the faithful witness" in his answer to this charge: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son *can do nothing of himself*, but what he seeth the Father do."* There can be no reasonable doubt that the *highest* nature and character of the Son was here the subject of dispute. At the very same time that Jesus in the most solemn, plain and positive manner, declared his entire dependence on his Father, he assures us he is to be *honored as the Father* on account of all judgment being *committed* to him: which honor and worship is certainly to be paid to his highest character.

John x. 30. 38. Here the Jews charged our blessed Redeemer with blasphemy, and with making himself God, be-

* Was this suffering the mistake of the Jews to pass "uncorrected?" See a Sermon by Mr. Thomas Baldwin, on the deity of Christ, page 14.

cause he said unto them, "I and my Father are one:" notwithstanding Jesus in the very next verse before, had assured them that his Father was "*greater than all.*" But let us hear the reply of the Savior: "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father"—what? declares to be the supreme God, or the second in a trinity of equal persons? No; but "whom the *Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world*, thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the *Son of God?*" Observe that the highest title Jesus here claimed or indeed ever claimed in his conferences with the Jews is *the Son of God.*

Mr. Stuart supposes that the term *Son of God* is not expressive of the highest nature of our Lord, and admits that the Jews misconstrued the words of Christ on these occasions. He represents that "prudence would not permit" of "his advancing claims to a truly divine character" on these occasions. But how does this sentiment agree with the fact that what he did say enraged them so much, that they sought to kill him immediately by stoning? As Jesus "knew what was in man," he must have known that his advancing the claim of being "the son of God," would actually produce the same effect in their minds, as if he had really claimed to be "equal with God:" for this was the fact, and their utmost rage was excited. It is equally evident, that they were in no more favorable condition to hear with candor the claims Jesus did advance, than to hear and examine claims to to a higher character. It appears to me, therefore, that the motive which Mr. Stuart supposes to have influenced our Savior to withhold his testimony to his highest character on this occasion did not exist.*

One of the declarations of our Lord, which occasioned the charge of the Jews, was, "I and my Father are one." Now, if he meant, as some suppose, that he and his Father are *one being*, the Jews did not misconstrue his words; but then it would have been necessary for Jesus to have supported this sense of the passage by a very different reason than that *the Father had sanctified and sent him into the world;* which is the language of dependence and inferiority, and can never be construed to afford any argument in favor of supreme divinity. A Trinitarian would argue,

* Letters to Miller, pages 145—148.

Jesus Christ and the Father are one, because they are "the same numerical essence," or because they are equal persons in the Godhead; and if this were true, no doubt Jesus Christ would have argued in the same manner. The holy Son of God is perfectly one with the Father, i. e. united with him in the glorious work of redeeming love, and in everything appertaining to the divine government. It is impossible for me to reconcile the solemn asseveration, that "the Son can do nothing of himself," with either "prudence" or truth; (considering that Jesus said this, when his *highest* character was the subject of disputation, and when he claimed to be honored in some sense as the Father;) without believing that he is, *in his most exalted nature, inferior to the Father.*

Suppose a number of persons were now assembled to discuss the important subject under consideration. Some affirm, and others deny that Jesus Christ is the supreme God. Suppose "the faithful witness" himself should come into this assembly, and say, "*Verily, verily, the Son can do nothing of himself;*" would not this suffice to terminate the discussion? My brethren, the words of Jesus Christ must determine the point, whether we admit that determination or not.

Matt. xx. 23. To 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. Matt. xxvi. 53. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels. John xiv. 13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, *that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* John viii. 49—58. I honor my Father, &c. I seek not mine own glory.—If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoreth me. I know him and keep his saying.—Before Abraham was I am. The last declaration which certainly refers to the *highest* character of the Savior, is in immediate connection with the preceding expressions of *inferiority* to the Father, and manifestly teaches us that *the very same nature* that was before Abraham is *dependent on the Father*, and in all things seeks, as his first object, his Father's honor and not his own. Jesus does not give the Jews the least intimation, whereby they might understand that in one sentence he referred to one nature, and in another sentence to a different nature.

Mark xiii. 32. But of that day, and that hour knoweth no *man*, no not the *angels* which are in heaven, neither the *Son*

but the FATHER. Observe here the gradation in the scale of being. Man, Angels, Son, Father. It is easy, indeed, to *say* that the Savior did not know of that day as *man*, but he knew it as *God*. But for the truth's sake, let us first reflect what *authority* we have for saying this. Did Jesus Christ say this? Certainly if this were the truth, it was perfectly easy for the faithful and true witness to have declared it. Could his disciples have understood him in this sense? He first told them no *man* knew it; it would, therefore, have been a needless repetition to have added, "*neither the Son*," if the import was *as man*. Surely this is one of the last passages in which we are to expect a repetition of ideas, where there is such a marked distinction in the scale of being. Besides, our Lord teaches us that the *Father only* knew of that day. But this is not true, if, as some suppose, the Father, Word, and Holy Spirit are three persons in one God; for, according to this, the Word or Son knew it equally with the Father. It makes no difference whether we consider the term *Word* or *Son*, as the distinctive appellation in the Godhead; in either case, it would still be untrue that the Father *only* knew of that day. Here, then, we have the testimony of Jesus himself, that he is, in his highest nature, *inferior to the Father in knowledge*. We have also the same divine testimony, John v. 19. John xvii. 2. Matt. xxviii. 18, &c. that he is *inferior to him in power*. He has indeed, (as Mr. Stuart acknowledges a *derived* being may have) "such an unlimited communication of power and knowledge and wisdom, that he may govern worlds." He knows all things, in a vastly higher sense than christians "know all things." 1 John ii. 20.

John vi. 38. For I came down from heaven, *not to do mine own will*, but the will of him that sent me. Jesus Christ does not say he entered "upon the duties of any public office," not to do his own will, &c. but I *came down from heaven*, not to do mine own will, &c. It is indeed said of John the Baptist, as Mr. S. remarks, "there was a man sent from God;" and "the same came to witness," &c. But was it ever said of John, or any other prophet but Jesus Christ, that he "*came down from heaven?*" Surely, then, these words of our dear Redeemer, which fully express *inferiority* to the Father, must be referred to the WORD, which "was with God" before he was made flesh. Mr. S. indeed, implicitly admits that Christ's being *sent* by the Father refers to his highest nature; for he considers the terms "*sending and being sent*," as proof of distinct persons in

the Godhead.* Will Mr. S. affirm that these terms furnish more proof of distinct *persons* than they do of distinct *beings?*

Heb. 1st chap. We have already remarked, that the design of the apostle in this chapter, is to exhibit the Son of God in his highest nature and most glorious character. In order to excite the attention of the Hebrews to HIM who is "the body" of all those ceremonies and sacrifices which were only the "shadows of good things to come;" he rejoices to set him forth in his unrivalled glory above all other creatures. But the inspired writer as clearly teaches us, that for these high titles and perfections the Son is *dependent* on the Father, and *inferior* to him. Is he "heir of all things?" He is "appointed" such by the Father. Has he "made the worlds?" It was the *Father* who made the worlds BY him. Is he "better than the angels? He is "*made*" so by the Father. Is he the Son of God, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person? He is the "*first begotten*" of the Father. Is he the object of angelic worship? It is by the *command* of the Father. Is he called *God?* It is as "*the Son,*" who is *begotten* of the Father, who is declared to be *his God*, and to have anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

Dear christian brethren, let us not be so positive that our present views are correct, as to prevent our perceiving the true import of the divine testimony, endeavoring only to reconcile that testimony with our system. Let us feel that it is *possible* at least, that our system may be erroneous; and that the opposition we feel to a particular doctrine, may arise from *wrong inferences* drawn from that doctrine. It is indeed easy to *say*, that every passage relating to Christ which expresses *inferiority*, refers to his human nature. But shall we say this without any regard to the connection of truth, in manifest violation of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in that connection? Is it not a violation of scripture and reason, to refer those passages which clearly teach the inferiority of the Son *in that state in which he existed before his incarnation*, to a nature *which had then no existence?* The word of truth plainly shews us that when he made the worlds, he was used as the grand *agent* of the Father. Heb. i. 2. Eph. iii. 9. That he enjoyed glory with the Father *before the world was*, for which he was *de-*

* Letters to Mr. Channing, page 36, 3d edition.

pendent on the Father. John xvii. 5. And that before he "was made flesh," his own will was perfectly subjected to that of his Father. Ps. xl. 7, 8.

My esteemed brother Stuart, of whose sincere desire to advocate the pure truth of God, I have no doubt, makes some remarks on this chapter, which I desire, "in the spirit of meekness," to notice. He admits that the same person who is called God, here calls another person his God; and observes, that "as the Messiah, the anointed King, he might, with the greatest propriety call Jehovah his God; for as Messiah he is to be considered as incarnate; and of course *subordinate*." Now let it be candidly considered, whether it is not as "*the anointed King*," that he is called *God* in the 45th Psalm, which is quoted in the first chapter to the Hebrews? It is evident to me that the term God is here used as a *relative title*, signifying his glorious dominion and high authority in that very mediatorial kingdom in which he is acknowledged to be *subordinate*. If so, is there not the same evidence, that *as God* he is subordinate, as that he is so as Messiah or anointed King? And is not this the obvious import of the passage, if read without regard to any system? "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity; therefore God, *thy* God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The objection which may be made to his being *called God*, unless he is *supreme Deity*, vanishes, when we consider that the same title is applied to rulers of a vastly inferior order. Ps. lxxxii. 1, &c.

Must not all the prayers of our Lord be considered as proof of his dependence on the Father, in respect even to his highest nature? How can we account for his always praying to the *Father*, rather than to the *Word*, if both are perfectly equal? Or rather, how can we account for his praying at all, if he was the supreme God and man in one person? Did Martha believe that she was addressing the *eternal God*, when she said, "I know that even now, whatsoever *thou wilt ask of God*, God will give it thee?"

John x. 17, 18. Here Jesus declares he had power to lay down his life, and power to take it again. Must not this be the power of his *highest nature?* Yet he adds, "*this commandment* (*commission**) *have I received of my Father*." John v. 26. For as the Father hath life in him-

* G. Campbell.

self, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. I do not know any passage, referable to Christ, which expresses anything like self-existence so much as this. If he is supreme God and man in one person, why did he not say, as the Father hath life in himself, so hath the Son life in himself? But how careful is "the faithful witness" to assure us, that the life he has in himself, is *given him of the Father*. If he was supreme Deity, could he need life from another? Let the serious enquirer after truth, read this passage and the connection, from the 19th to the 30th verses, and he will observe that the very same person who is to be honored as the Father, and who is to raise the dead declares, "I can of mine own self do nothing. I seek *not mine own will*, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

Phil. ii. 6. This passage is urged with the greatest confidence, as conclusive proof of the supreme Deity of Christ; as if the term "equal" is never used but in the most literal and unlimited sense. But is this the case? Ps. lv. 13. David speaks of "a man mine *equal*." Now, whoever this person was, he certainly was not *perfectly* equal with the king. So Luke xx. 36. The saints in glory are said to be "equal unto the angels;" but surely this cannot mean *perfect* equality.

But it is conceded by pious and learned christians of different sentiments, that our translation of this passage is neither a just expression of the sense of the original, nor consistent with the scope of the apostle's reasoning. Mr. Doddridge in his Family Expositor, considers the words "to be equal with God" as an improper translation: and that they ought to be rendered, "*to be and appear as God.*" "So, (he remarks) ισα Θεω is most exactly rendered, agreeably to the force of ισα in many places in the Septuagint, which Dr. Whitby has collected in his note on this place. The proper Greek phrase for *equal to God* is ισον τω Θεω, which is used, John v. 18. Mr. Pierce thus paraphrases the clause before us, "He was not eager in retaining that likeness to God," of which he was before possessed."

The learned Macknight in his translation of the Epistles, agrees with Doddridge. He renders the passage, "*To be like God.* So (he says) το ειναι ισα Θεω, literally signifies. For Whitby hath proved in the clearest manner, that ισα is used adverbially by the LXX. to express *likeness*, but not *equality*, the proper term for which is ισον. So that if the apostle had meant to say, *equal with God*, the phrase

would have been ισον Θεω, as we have it in John v. 18. ισον εαυτον ποιων τω Θεω, making himself equal with God." He farther remarks, "if μορφη Θεϋ, signifies *the nature of God*, and ισα Θεω, the being equal with God, the apostle hath said of Christ, *Who having the same nature and perfections with God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God in nature and perfections.* But this is a tautology, which cannot be imputed to so accurate a writer as St. Paul."

The whole scope of this interesting testimony is inconsistent with the idea of *perfect equality*, which would certainly be *immutable;* whereas the apostle exhibits a *real* and *great change* in the condition of the Son of God as an example of humility to the Philippians. Let the same mind be in you which was in Jesus Christ, who being in the form (or "the image) of the invisible God," thought not the being like God, a thing to be seized, or "a thing to be greedily sought or appropriated;" but made himself of no reputation, &c. "*He divested himself.* Εαυτον εκενωσε, literally, *he emptied himself.*"* There was once an awful example of pride exhibited to the "powers in the heavenly places," by "the angels that kept not their first estate." But the counsels of redeeming love unfolded to the intelligent universe, the most affecting example of humility that ever was, or probably ever will be exhibited. He who "is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature," the well beloved, and only begotten Son of God, moved with compassion for our miserable race, "came down from heaven," "was made flesh." "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," to declare the righteousness of God, "that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Thus he opened the door of our prison, and Justice permitted the Angel of mercy to enter, "to proclaim liberty to the captives." Oh, what love is here! He who was rich became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. Here was *real* humility; not a mere *show or appearance of it.* What a spectacle was presented to the intelligent universe when the Son of God, "the first born of every creature," *actually* expired on the cross!

But does not all the beauty and glory of this affecting scene vanish, and does not all the force of the apostle's reasoning sink away, if we suppose that Jesus Christ never existed, *before* "he took upon him the form of a servant;" or if we suppose he existed only as the *supreme immutable*

* Macknight.

Jehovah? Can we possibly believe that the *real change of condition*, the *real humbling, or emptying of himself*, ascribed in the word of truth to the Son, in reference to his coming down from heaven, can ever be ascribed to him "with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning?" Can we believe that the supreme Deity "*made himself of no reputation?*" Does the inspired apostle teach us this? Does he not teach us that the *very same person* who humbled himself, is *exalted by God* as the reward of humiliation and suffering? Is not the worship offered him, "*to the glory of God the Father?*" If we read this portion of divine truth, unbiased by pre-conceived opinion, can we possibly avoid the conclusion, that the person who humbled himself, is a distinct being from him who exalted him as the reward of his humiliation? Or can we avoid the conclusion, that he who has the name *given* him, is a distinct being from him who *gave* him that name? Or, that he who is worshiped, is a distinct being from him, *for whose glory he is worshiped?* If Jesus Christ is the supreme Deity; who is that other being of whom the apostle speaks, *who exalted him, who gave him a name, and for whose glory he is worshiped?*

It is evident, that it was the *voluntary actual parting* with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and for which he afterwards *prayed;* and in his unparalleled sufferings and death, that the real humility consisted, which the apostle exhibits to christians, as an example worthy, as far as possible, of their imitation.

Mr. Stuart supposes that Christ, as *supreme God*, "made himself of no reputation." Apparently convinced of the impropriety of such a sentiment, however, he adds, "Yet, how incompetent must these translations be! So far as Christ is the immutable God he cannot change; i. e. he cannot *divest himself* of his essential perfections," &c.* Here let it be noticed, that Mr. S. considers not only our *translation*, but the *original inspired truth* INCOMPETENT! He says the original "means, as we translate it, *made himself of no reputation.*" I solemnly ask, must not that be an *unjustifiable* attachment to system, which influences us, when we are brought into the dilemma, either to charge our own system, or to charge the word of God with incompetency, to prefer the latter? I would ask that respected writer, was not Jesus *actually divested* of that glory

* Letters to Channing, p. 91, 3d edit.

which he prayed to be restored to him, John xvii. 5.? And where, I ask, is that example of humility which the apostle sets forth in such an affecting manner, if there was *no real change of condition?* Mr. S. observes, "he may veil the brightness of his glories for a time," &c. But does this representation accord with the scriptures of truth? Are we taught, that when the Son of God appeared, the glories of supreme Deity were veiled for a time? Or did mortals then behold "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," in a manner they never beheld it before? Was it not then that the glory of 'the invisible God" shone with such excelling luster that even the angels desired to look into it? Let us then view the incarnate Son of God, not as "an intervening cloud" which obscures for a while the luster of the divine perfections, but rather as "the bright and morning Star," which reflects them with peculiar radiance.

1 Cor. xv. 24—28. Here the apostle exhibits to our view that solemn and interesting period, when our glorious King and Mediator, having reigned until all enemies are put under his feet, "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even *the Father;* when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power."—"Then shall the *Son also himself be subject unto him* that put all things under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL." Let us examine this testimony as humble enquirers after truth. Are we not here taught, that the Son is a distinct being from the Father, and inferior to him? Is it possible for language to express this more explicitly? Could the inspired apostle have made such a declaration as this, if he had been taught by the Holy Spirit that the Son was "*God and man in one person for ever?*" Shall we say, that the Son, *as it respects his humanity only*, shall be subject? But why did not the inspired apostle say this? We have equal proof that something more than humanity will be *subject* to the Father, as we have that something more than humanity will accomplish all the arduous and glorious work of the mediatorial kingdom. The SON, the very same Son of God, who reigns and triumphs over all enemies, is to be subject to him who put all things under him. Here is a *person*, a *being*, subject to the eternal Majesty. If then, the Son is God and man *in one inseparable person*, who, and where is that person, that *being* of whom the apostle speaks, who is to be subject to him who is ALL IN ALL? Do we say that it is *the man Christ Jesus?* Is then the man Christ Jesus, to exist eternally as "*the*

Son," a distinct person or being from his highest nature, whatever that nature may be? We must certainly view him who is subject to the infinite Majesty, as a *distinct being;* or it is obvious, that our views have no accordance with those of the apostle. Moreover, if "the only true God" is *triune*, why did not the inspired writer assure us, that Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the *Father, Word and Holy Ghost?* How plainly does his testimony in this passage harmonize with that in another, "to us there is one God the *Father?*" While it is impossible for me to reconcile this part of divine truth with Trinitarian views, it appears perfectly harmonious with the analogy of truth. The glorious Spirit "called the Word of God;" "the only begotten Son of God;" "the first born of every creature," was made flesh, took the BODY prepared for him by the Father, accomplished the work given him to do on earth, and now in his glorified body, is "at the right hand of the Majesty on high," reigning until he hath put all enemies under his feet. Then shall he deliver up the kingdom to God, even the FATHER, and "put down all rule and all authority and power;" and thus be more manifestly subject to the Father, "that God may be ALL IN ALL."

Although the Son of God, who is King in Zion, is honored with appropriate titles of dignity and glory, he is distinguished from "the only true God," by the following titles of supremacy which belong to "the invisible God" alone.

Jehovah. Whose name *alone* is Jehovah. Ps. lxxxiii. 18.
The eternal God. Deut. xxxiii. 27.
Most high God. Mark v. 7. Dan. v. 18.
God alone. Ps. lxxxvi. 10. Isa. xxxvii. 16. Lord alone. Neh. ix. 6.
God of heaven. Dan. ii. 44.
Besides me there is no God. Isa. xliv. 6.
Who only hath immortality. 1 Tim. vi. 16.
The only true God. John xvii. 3.
The King eternal, immortal, invisible. 1 Tim. i. 17.
The only wise God. 1 Tim. i. 17.
Lord God omnipotent. Rev. xix. 6.
Blessed and only Potentate. 1 Tim. vi. 15.*

* If any suppose that this is referable to Jesus Christ, the contrary will appear by observing that the apostle speaks of *an object shown*, and *a person who shows it*. Christ is the object exhibited. The Father who in his time will show him, is the blessed and only Potentate, &c.

One God and Father of all. Eph. iv. 6.
The only Lord God. Jude 4.
There is but one God, the Father. 1 Cor. viii. 6.
The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. xi. 31.

CHAPTER VIII.

Containing remarks on the connection of the scriptural testimony of the character of the Son of God with the other doctrines of revealed truth.

It is alleged by Trinitarians, as a confirmation of the correctness of their views, that those views only can be made to harmonize with all the important truths of the gospel. I was once of the opinion that the doctrine of Jesus Christ's supreme Deity, was essential to several important doctrines revealed in the word of God. But I always felt a difficulty in attempting to reconcile it with the *divine unity*. And I may confidently appeal to every candid reader to determine, whether the views advocated in these pages, or the views of Trinitarians best accord with the important truth "To us, there is but ONE GOD THE FATHER." Without reference to any particular system, let any christian candidly consider, whether he can possibly conceive of *three equal persons*, without conceiving of *three equal beings?* Can we conceive of three equal persons, each of which is God, without conceiving of three equal Gods? Or can we conceive of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as *together* constituting the only true God, without conceiving that the Father *alone* is not the one God? Far be it, that we should pry into those "*secret things*" which belong to God; but "the things which are revealed" are for us and for our children to understand. And what is more plainly revealed than the truth, that "there is but one God THE FATHER?"

It is indeed observed, that the word *person* is used "merely from the poverty of language," and that "we speak of *persons* in the Godhead, to express that which in some respect or other corresponds to *persons* as applied to men." It is admitted that the word "persons as applied to men" always signifies *distinct beings*. Can we then, have an idea of three equal divine persons, without

having an idea, which in some respect supposes three equal Gods? If we have an idea *analogous* to three equal *persons*, we must certainly have an idea *analogous* to three equal *beings*, which is to have an idea analogous to the greatest error in the world. If we use "the language of approximation," let it be that which approximates to *truth* and not to *error*. When it is said, "God is angry with the wicked," (although we know that the mind of the Deity cannot be affected with the passion of anger as we are,) no idea is conveyed to the mind which is contrary to any revealed truth, but an idea perfectly harmonious with that truth. The expression impresses the mind with an idea of God's holy opposition to sin. But the proposition, that there are three persons in the Deity, if it convey any idea at all, must certainly impress the mind with an idea opposed to the revealed truth of the divine unity.

The efficacy of "THE ATONEMENT" is supposed by many to depend on the union of the Deity with the man Christ Jesus in one person. It must be conceded, that the necessity of such a union is no where *expressly* revealed in the scriptures. The necessity of it is *inferred* by the following mode of reasoning: Sin is an *infinite* evil. Justice requires *infinite* satisfaction. No *finite* being can render it. An *adequate* mediator must therefore be an *infinite being*. It is obvious, that, according to this statement, there must be two infinite beings, or the infinite Jehovah must himself mediate between himself and fallen man, or all mankind must perish. The two first suppositions are unscriptural and absurd. The latter, the infinite love of God hath prevented. It must be admitted that sin is an infinite evil *in this sense*, that it is opposed to infinite benevolence, and in its own nature tends to produce general disorder in the universe. But it is not an infinite evil, because it is *the act of an infinite being*. Now, if sin is to be viewed as an infinite evil, though not the act of an infinite being, because of its nature and tendency; must not the atonement of the Son of God, on the very same principle, be considered as an infinite atonement, though *not the act of an infinite being*, because its nature and tendency is to honor the infinite perfections of Jehovah, and produce infinite order and blessedness in the universe?

It is also argued, "if the most exalted creature be dependent on God, for his existence and faculties, it is obvious that he is bound to love and serve him, with all these

faculties; and if, when he has served his Maker to the extent of his power, he has done no more than his duty, it is evident, that he can make no proper satisfaction for the offences of others." It must be admitted, that the Son of God, "who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature," was ever under obligation to "do always those things which please" God. But it was not his duty to humble himself, and suffer and die *on his own account.* The tenor of that law of love by which the Infinite governs all intelligences appears to be, Obey and live. Disobey and die. But the sinner's friend knew no sin himself. Justice required no tear of sorrow, no suffering of the holy and well beloved Son of God, much less that unspeakable grief, and those overwhelming agonies which he endured when "the chastisement of our peace was upon him." His humiliation, suffering, and death, were a *voluntary* sacrifice for the most glorious end, even to manifest the harmony of the perfections of God in the salvation of men. "To declare—his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." What a glorious view of the perfection and immutability of the holy law of God was exhibited to the powers in the heavenly places, when they heard their Lord and Maker say, "Lo, I come," &c. What a view of the love of God to man, when they saw his beloved Son expire on the cross!

And now we ask, since he who is the most glorious being in the universe, God only excepted, hath magnified and honored the law by his own *real* humiliation and obedience unto death; what has reason to allege against God having mercy "on whom he will have mercy," and pardoning every penitent, believing sinner? Who shall limit the creative power of Jehovah, (before whom the nations of the earth are as a drop of the bucket) and say, that it is impossible for him to create a being of such vast dignity and glory, whose voluntary humiliation and obedience and sufferings, shall be adequate to display his justice in pardoning the penitent sinner? How precious is the following testimony: "After that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly *through Jesus Christ our Savior;* that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs ac-

cording to the hope of eternal life." Titus iii. 4—7. "Blessed be *the God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places *in Christ;* according as he hath chosen us *in him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children *by Jesus Christ* to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us *accepted in the beloved;* in whom we have redemption *through his blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. i. 3—7.

It is admitted by our Trinitarian brethren, that according to their views, all the *real* obedience, and sufferings, and death of the Son of God, were *only human.* Indeed, it is absurd to suppose that the supreme Deity is capable of actual suffering. Where then, we ask, is that *peculiar* love of God in the gift of his SON, to suffer and die for us, of which the scriptures speak? Where that *glorious dignity* of the *real* sufferer, which the scriptural representation excites us to behold and admire? Does not the divine testimony represent that the great love of God to us was manifested by *the greatness of the gift?* "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he first loved us, and gave his SON to be the propitiation for our sins." "The blood of Jesus Christ his SON cleanseth us from all sin." "We have a *great* High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the *Son of God.*" "For God so loved the world that he gave his *only begotten Son,*" &c. Does not the opinion that the term *Son of God*, signifies only human nature miraculously begotten, divest all these passages of their peculiar force and beauty? Does it not diminish the love of God in the gift of his Son in an unspeakable degree? Can any unbiased mind avoid perceiving that the scriptures of truth plainly teach us, that it was *the very same glorious character* that was with the Father before the world was, that "*came down from heaven,*" who *really and actually* humbled himself, and suffered and died on the cross?

Another serious objection to the views of our Trinitarian brethren may now be considered. After the most diligent and prayerful examination of this important subject, it does appear to me, that the doctrine of the Trinity presents no adequate "Mediator between God and man." I am fully

aware that the impressions of Trinitarians on this subject are just the reverse. But the cause of this, I apprehend is, that they have not sufficiently considered that a *Mediator*, must be viewed in *distinction from both parties at variance.* They consider the Mediator as *the supreme God himself*, united to the man Jesus. But this is repugnant to all just ideas of mediatorship; for a mediator is one that *intervenes between other persons.* So the scriptures represent that there is "one Mediator *between* God and men." A person cannot *mediate or intercede* for himself. The Mediator between God and men, therefore, whoever he is, must be viewed as *distinct from both.* The Mediator, consequently, according to the doctrine of the Trinity is a mere man, and all his humiliation and sufferings, his death, and his intercession, can have no other virtue or merit than that of *simple holy humanity.* And can such a mediator be adequate to the important purpose of saving rebel man consistently with the holy perfections of God? Can the offering of *simple humanity*, the offering of *a single man*, be a competent "propitiation for the sins of the whole world?" Was this all the displeasure manifested against sin by infinite holiness, when darkness overshadowed the mount of Calvary, and the rending rocks proclaimed that Jesus had expired? Nay, verily, for "surely this was the Son of God." This was "the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature," "by whom also he made the worlds."

The best writers on Atonement, consider it an *essential principle*, that the sufferings and death of the Meditator, must exhibit to the universe, the evil nature of sin, and the perfection of the law of God, as clearly and fully, as the execution of the penalty of the law on all transgressors would have done. Now, can any person capable of reflection, suppose that the most acute sufferings of a single holy man, for a few years, can manifest the holiness of the law, the evil of sin, and the divine displeasure against it, *as much* as the entire destruction of *the whole* human race? It is easy, indeed, to say, that the union of Deity with humanity give virtue to his sufferings. But whatever union we imagine to exist between Deity and humanity, unless we suppose a union, by which Deity should be *really humbled* and *actually suffer;* it is obvious that *the whole suffering*, which is the *ground of atonement* is merely human; and thus it is demonstrated that there can be no more virtue or efficacy in the atonement than that of

simple humanity. It is indeed an important truth, that *dignity of character*, rather than *quantity of suffering*, gives efficacy to atonement; but it is important to remember, that it is the dignity of him who *really suffers*.—When the Grecian king Zaleucus, required *his own son* to lose one of his eyes for transgressing the law against adultery, the king manifested his inflexible regard to righteousness: but if, instead of this, he had caused the eye of a fly to be put out, and spared his son, he would have rendered his law and authority contemptible throughout his whole kingdom. So, when the holy intelligences beheld the Eternal Majesty giving his own Son, his best beloved, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person:"—when they saw him *really* and voluntarily divest himself of the glory he had with the Father before the world was;—when they saw the *very same glorious Spirit actually suffering* during the period of his humiliation; in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross when his God withdrew his consolation,—then they saw the glorious fulfilment of the prophetic word, "He will magnify the law, and make it honorable." But if, instead of this, they had seen a mere man suffer and die, and the Word or Son of God (with whom that man was supposed to be in some mysterious manner united) not suffer at all, they must surely have had vastly lower conceptions of the glory of the law, the evil of sin, and of the determination of Jehovah to maintain his holy authority in the universe.

It is the inconceivable dignity and perfection of the *real sufferer*, that gives value and efficacy to the atonement.—And in the perfect obedience of the only begotten Son of God, even to the death of the cross, we behold an adequate expression of the divine displeasure against sin, and of the righteousness and immutability of that law of which it is the transgression. Thus, in our precious Redeemer, "mercy and truth meet together;" "righteousness and peace embrace each other."

Who then, may I be permitted to ask, has the most scriptural and exalted views of the "one Mediator between God and men?" He who views the *real* sufferings and death of the Lamb of God, as *merely human;* or he who views these as the great sacrifice of that *only begotten Son* of God who was with him before the world was, and is the brightness of his glory and express image of his person? Can any reflecting mind fail of perceiving that the *real atonement* in the latter case must reflect far more honor on

the justice of God in pardoning sinners for the sake of his dear Son, than in the former?

Among all the various objects in the universe the mind is capable of contemplating, there is none on which the renewed soul loves to fasten with such intensity, as on the Cross. At Calvary she delights to linger, to admire the concentration of the glory of God in his expiring Son. On this astonishing spectacle, indeed, do all holy beings fix their minds with the most solicitous desire and ardent praise, from the exalted seraph, who burns with increasing rapture, to the babe in Christ, out of whose mouth God hath perfected his praise. And such is the increasing delight my soul hath enjoyed in the contemplation of this subject, since the Lord has favored me with a more correct knowledge of his only begotten and well beloved Son, that I feel it to be an ample remuneration for all that deeply regretted loss of fellowship, the manifestation of these views will occasion. My heart's desire and prayer to God for my brethren is, that they may behold this glory: that they may see the vast difference between the real and actual humiliation, and sufferings and death of the Son of God who made the worlds, and the sufferings and death of simple humanity: and that they may perceive how totally inadequate the latter must be to answer the purpose of divine wisdom in manifesting the righteousness of God in the salvation of millions of men; and how completely the former exhibits to us that God can "be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

It has been also considered, that the doctrine of *the total moral depravity of man*, is connected with Trinitarian views of the Savior. If the above remarks on the scriptural doctrine of atonement are correct, it is evident that no such connection exists. Indeed, it is obvious, that the Trinitarian sentiment is far more difficult to reconcile with the doctrine of man's entire guilt, pollution, and ruin, than the sentiments advocated in these pages: because the former exhibits a far inferior sacrifice for sin than the latter. In the former case we behold the *real sufferer* on the cross *as man only;* in the latter, we view him as the matchless *Son of God* united to the body prepared for him. It may be said that those who disbelieve the doctrine of the Trinity, generally deny the scriptural doctrines of total depravity, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, personal election according to the sovereign pleasure of God, who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, the perseverance of

the saints in holiness, &c. Suppose it is so. Is it not a fact also, that many *Trinitarians* deny these doctrines? Are not some Arminians, and others Universalists? If the character of the doctrine of the Trinity is to be determined by the character of those who have avowed it, what shall we think of it, when we find the Beast himself, the Pope of Rome, and thousands who bear his image, among its most zealous advocates? May we not as well argue that the doctrine cannot be true, because it was connected with all the false doctrine and superstitions of the most anti-christian community that ever existed, as to argue that the opposite doctrine cannot be true, because many, or most of its advocates are in some important points erroneous? The most erroneous may be convinced of some truth. Satan himself acknowledged Jesus to be the "holy one of God." Are we to deny it, because he confessed it? I cannot speak concerning others; but I know that, notwithstanding I have had doubts of the truth of the Trinitarian sentiment for many years, these doubts have produced no change of mind respecting the doctrines of God's holy sovereignty in personal election, total depravity, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, justification by grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, the perseverance of all saints, and the "everlasting destruction" of those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And since my mind has been established in my present views, by a diligent and prayerful examination of the divine testimony; I have experienced a precious enlargement of soul in the contemplation of the love of God in the gift of his Son, and in the view of the efficacy of the atonement, and the honor done thereby to all the holy perfections of Jehovah in the salvation of lost man. Many passages of divine truth, which were before unintelligible to me, now appear clear, and beautifully harmonizing with the general truth of the gospel.

Without being justly chargeable with want of candor or charity, we have certainly scriptural reason to believe that the views which many cherish and avow concerning the Son of God, are such as tend to "frustrate the grace of God," and entirely pervert the gospel of Christ. With such as substitute human virtue in the place of the great sacrifice, and refuse to unite with the heavenly host in worshiping the Lamb, my mind can never harmonize. Let us pray for such that they may behold "the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ," and no longer

reject his counsel against themselves; solemnly considering that it is impossible to escape the wrath of Almighty God, "if we neglect so great salvation."

CHAPTER IX.

Containing strictures on some late publications.

The following remarks are not communicated for the sake of exposing the inconsistencies of my respected christian brethren; but with the desire, that (by convincing each other of the impropriety of any of our present views,) we may be more united in the holy truth.

In Mr. Miller's third Letter on Unitarianism, he asks, "Where, then, is the absurdity or contradiction of an *eternal necessary emanation* from him, (God the Father) or, if you please, an *eternal generation?*" To this Mr. Stuart in his Letters to Mr. Miller, (p. 78,) replies; "The scriptures then, as you aver, have left the three fold mode of existence *unexplained.* May I be permitted to ask, now, if teaching the doctrine of *the eternal and necessary emanation or generation* of the Son of God, (whom *as Son* you view to be the second person in the Trinity,) be not attempting an explanation of a subject, which the sacred writers leave *unexplained?* Is not existence or subsistence by *emanation, a mode* of existence?"

I would now respectfully ask Mr. Stuart, if teaching the doctrine of *three persons in one God*, "be not attempting an explanation of a subject which the sacred writers leave *unexplained?*" Is not existence by plurality of persons a *mode* of existence? Are not the words *three persons in the Godhead*, an attempted definition of that very distinction in the Deity which you acknowledge to be "*undefinable?*"

Mr. Miller also remarks, "That mystery should be readily allowed to exist every where in God's *creation*, and in God's *providence*, and at the same time be unceremoniously rejected from God's *revelation*, is more than strange!" To this, Mr. Stuart, (p. 88.) replies in the following excellent manner: "The cry of *mystery, mystery*, which is so often raised against certain doctrines of the scriptures, can never influence the real lover of truth to reject them. But what is unintelligible, or surpasses our comprehension, belongs to *things* and not to *words*,*

* This is an important distinction. The "words" used by the inspired writers to convey divine truth to the mind are *intelligible* words. If not

What we *express* respecting things, must of course be intelligible; for language is merely the vehicle by which our thoughts are conveyed to others. What we understand in our own minds, we can express to the mind of others; and what we do not understand, of course we cannot express, because our language, which is only the vehicle by which our thoughts are conveyed, cannot convey thoughts or conceptions which do not exist. It is very easy then, to draw the line of distinction, between mystery which is connected with *things* or phenomena, and mystery which belongs only to *language*. The latter, I take it, always proceeds either from want of skill, or crafty design, or an intention to speak enigmas. We are not allowed, therefore, by the common laws of language, to assert any thing which, when examined, proves to be either a contradiction, or an incongruity; and then to take refuge from objections which may be made to our language, under the pretence that the subject is mysterious, and consequently, it is improper to urge investigation respecting it. It may be true, indeed, that the subject of which we speak is mysterious. But what I have expressed about such a subject, if I have used language with any propriety, is, of course, only what I knew or conceived about it in my own mind. This can certainly be made intelligible to another mind; and there is, therefore, no mystery in my *expression;* at least there ought to be none."

After this just and lucid distinction between *words unintelligible* and *things undefinable*, if I ask Mr. S. what

they could not reveal that truth to the mind. The words, "There is one God, the Father" are *intelligible* words. The words, "there are three persons in one God," in the position they occupy in the proposition, are *unintelligible*. The revelation of an incomprehensibility is a contradiction, for that which cannot be *understood* by the human mind cannot be *revealed* to the human mind. There are many secret things belonging to God and incomprehensible to us *which are connected* with things revealed and comprehensible; but the things which are revealed belong to us to know, to believe and to practise, and therefore must all be comprehensible. To suppose otherwise is to suppose that the divine purpose in revelation is frustrated.

In our English version we read indeed of "the revelation of the mystery," &c. "Great is the mystery of godliness," &c. The true meaning of Paul is the revelation of the *secret*," for such is the import of the Greek term. (See G. Campbell's dissertations.) The glorious truths of the Gospel and the gracious purpose of God that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs with the Jews, were secrets, "now made manifest." Rom. xvi. 25, 26. There are indeed many things *connected* with revealed godliness which are incomprehensible; but this is not the meaning of the apostle in 1. Tim. iii. 16. as is commonly supposed. The mystery or secret is revealed in the passage itself in six comprehensible facts.

is that distinction of which he speaks, when he says, there are three persons in the Godhead; can he consistently answer, "I do not know?"* Mr. S. indeed says, "we speak of *person* in the Godhead, to express that which in some respect or other corresponds to *persons*, as applied to men, i. e. *some distinction.*" I reply, the term as applied to men signifies *distinct beings;* does he use it in this sense? Mr. S. will answer, certainly not. I ask Mr. S. then, (for his own principles authorize me to pursue the enquiry,) In what sense, as the term is applied to men, do you use it in application to the Deity? I wish to know what ideas any person has in his mind corresponding with *his declaration,* that there are three persons in one God; a declaration no where to be found in the scriptures. It is true, "the subject of which we speak is mysterious. But what I have *expressed* about such a subject, if I have used language with any propriety, is, of course, only what I knew or conceived about it in my own mind. This can certainly be made intelligible to another mind; and there is, therefore, no mystery in my *expression;* at least there ought to be none."

If the scriptures reveal any distinction in "the only true God," let it be stated in "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." But to use expressions on this important subject, of which we have no corresponding ideas in our own minds, is certainly to "darken counsel with words without knowledge." Mr. S. himself says, (p. 34,) Letters to Mr. C. "I could heartily wish, indeed, that the word *person* never had come into the symbols of the churches." Yet he says, "it is perhaps inexpedient or even impossible altogether to reject it." So long, indeed, as we prefer the words which *man's wisdom teacheth*, to those which the *Holy Ghost teacheth*, it will probably be retained. I would however respectfully request my dear brother S. if he continues to use it, to inform us whether the mystery of the *language* proceeds "from want of skill, or an intention to speak enigmas?" Of "crafty design" I would not suspect him a moment.

Mr. Stuart remarks to Mr. Miller, on the subject of eternal generation, (p. 81,) "To understand how the *same numerical essence* can be said to COMMUNICATE the *whole* of itself *to the same numerical essence*, I must give over in despair, to intellects of a different order from that which I possess." But I ask, is this any more unintelligible than

* Letters to Mr. Channing, page 35, 3d edition.

Mr. Stuart's definition of John i. 1. which supposes that *the same numerical essence* WAS WITH *the same numerical essence?* Page 36, Letters to Mr. C., Mr. S. refers the terms "*sending and being sent*," to the first and second persons in the Godhead. Accordingly, he represents that *the same numerical essence* SENT and WAS SENT BY *the same numerical essence!* Is this any more intelligible? Or, can any proposition be more unintelligible than the following? *The same numerical essence*, PRAYED *to the same numerical essence* to be glorified with the glory which he had *with the same numerical essence* before the world was. To any one who possesses intellect capable of understanding this, I should think the sentiment of Mr. Miller can present no difficulty.

Mr. Stuart, says (p. 92.,) "The *Logos* is really and verily divine, self-existent, uncaused, immutable *in himself*." Mr. Miller, (p. 107) remarks, "If this be true of the *Logos*, it is also true of the other persons. But if this be so, are there not three Gods?" To avoid this difficulty, Mr. M. who is also a zealous Trinitarian, denies that either of the persons possesses complete divinity. The inspired apostle indeed assures us that "there is but one God THE FATHER." Mr. M.'s system obviously denies this divine testimony. His words are, "as I understand this subject the three persons of the blessed Trinity TOGETHER constitute one self-existent, independent and infinitely perfect God." Again he says, "We cannot say that each person possesses in himself complete separate and independent divinity."* *It appears, then, that all the censure that Mr. M. has passed on those who deny the complete and independent divinity of the Son of God, falls upon himself.* If Mr. M. supposes, that according to Mr. S.'s views, there are three Gods; may not Mr. S. infer from Mr. M.'s system that there is no God at all?

Does not the system of that writer clearly represent the ONE GOD as *divisible?* When he conceives of the FATHER, *in distinction* from the SON and HOLY SPIRIT, must he not conceive of him, (I ask with reverence and regret) as *one-third* of the infinite Deity? How revolting to the intelligent mind is such a theory! Mr. M. also supposes that the divine persons in the Godhead are distinguished from each other "by an incommunicable property," (p. 36.) If so, it necessarily follows, that the distinguish-

*Letters to Stuart, p. 106, 107. Will Mr. M. inform us by what process of reasoning he proves that three, or any number of *imperfect* persons can make one *perfect* God?

ng properties or perfections of the second and third ersons are not possessed by the first; consequently, the Father is not *infinitely perfect.*

I rejoice that I am able to close these strictures with a uotation from Mr. Stuart, which manifests the triumphnt victory of his good sense, at one happy moment, over n erroneous system. He assures Mr. Channing, (p. 114,) hat it "is incorrect,—to represent them (Trinitarians) s holding that Jesus Christ is the *same being as the Faher* if you mean by this, *in all respects the same.*" Certainly this is synonymous with saying, that HE IS *in ome respect* ANOTHER AND DISTINCT BEING. Let this oncession, then, suffice to terminate the controversy with Mr. S. concerning the doctrine of the Trinity.

Note. Mr. Bedell, in a sermon on the Trinity, remarks, "The fatal rror which infidels and other sceptics make on this subject is this: They pply to a fact, that which is true only of a mode of existence." What is e supposed fact? It is that there are three persons in one God. Now I k, does not this proposition itself declare "*a mode of existence?*" The enerated author attempts to illustrate the subject by exhibiting the disnction between the fact that *the grass grows*, and the manner *how it rows*. He asks, "now because I believe nothing about the manner in hich it grows, do I not therefore believe that it grows? Unquestionably see that it grows, I understand that it grows, I believe that it grows, d no man on the face of the earth can say more, or is required to say ore."

Now, if any man on the face of the earth can truly say, "I understand at" three persons are one God, he must acknowledge the aptitude of this ustration. If the proposition that there are three persons in one God is intelligible as the proposition, "the grass grows," then has our author irly untied this Gordian knot. Is it so? Can any man have an idea of e, two or three *persons*, without having an idea of one, two or three *beigs?* The proposition, "the grass grows," is perfectly intelligible, alough we know not *how it grows*. It contradicts no known truth or fact, hereas, the proposition that there are three persons in one God is *in itlf* unintelligible and contradictory. It contradicts the known fact that ery distinct intelligent person is a distinct intelligent being.

CHAPTER X.

Containing concluding remarks.

It is truly lamentable that so many professed christians re contented to believe what they have been taught om their earliest days, and what their pious ancestors elieved, without diligently searching the scriptures to now the truth. I do not make this observation with articular reference to any one denomination of christians. las! it is too applicable to us all. It is a solemn conideration, that if we embrace any sentiment, true or false, nerely because we have been taught it "by man," our

faith cannot be acceptable to God; for it stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. It is indeed an affecting thought, that the faith of many respecting the most interesting subjects, "is taught by the precept of men." Let us imitate the noble Bereans who "searched the scriptures daily," to ascertain whether what Paul preached was according to the word of God. As the disciples of Jesus are to be sanctified "through the truth," how can their holy union be effected, without a diligent and prayerful study of the word of the Lord, independently of all the systems of men? It is to the "more sure word of prophecy," and to "the testimony of Jesus," which is its spirit or substance, that we do well to take heed, "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."

The opposition which many pious persons feel to several revealed truths, arises from a misconception of those truths, and from the consequent false inferences which flow from that misconception. Thus many object to the doctrines of election, and the immutability of the divine purposes. And thus many object to the scriptural character of the Son of God. It is necessary to suspend our judgment until we have diligently compared *the whole of the divine testimony*, on any particular subject, and not hastily adopt an opinion on the examination of a few detached passages, and thus sacrifice the truth to our own slothfulness or popularity. Is it worthy a rational man to cry out heresy against any sentiment, when he has not even once taken his Bible and *compared all the passages* which relate to that sentiment? Yet how often is this done by professed christians!

As many persons appear to be confirmed in the belief of the doctrine of the Trinity, and are deterred from a diligent examination of the subject, by the supposition that almost all pious christians in every age have believed it, it is desirable that such a mistake should be corrected. The following quotations will serve to show that many of the primitive christians did not believe that the Son of God was either *self-existent* or *eternal*.

Irenæus, who was but second from John, says, "John, declaring the one God Almighty, and the *only begotten* Christ Jesus by whom all things were made, &c.* He exhibited a creed which embraced *the general belief of christians in that age*. He says, "the church, which is

*Historical Views of Heresies, page 53.

dispersed through the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles, and their immediate successors, the belief in one God, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, the maker of the heaven, the earth, and the sea,* and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, made flesh for our salvation, &c. That to Christ Jesus our Lord, and God and Savior and King, *according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father*, every knee shall bow," &c.†

How evident is it from this creed, that "the general belief of christians" in the primitive ages, agreed with that of the apostle Paul, "to us there is but one God, THE FATHER." How evident it is that they believed that the Son was *begotten*, and that all his dignity and exaltation was "according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father."

Ignatius, who lived in the first century, says, "If any one say there is one God, and doth not confess Jesus Christ, but thinks the Lord to be a mere man, and not the *only begotten* God, the wisdom and word, &c., he is a serpent," &c.‡ "In the shepherd of Hermas, a writer cotemporary with Clemens Romanus," is the following passage: "God," says he, placed that Holy Spirit, *which was created first of all*, in the body in which he might dwell," &c.§ Justin Martyr, who lived about the middle of the second century, says, "God in the beginning, before any thing was created, *begat a Rational Power, from himself;* which is called by the Holy Ghost, Glory of the Lord, and sometimes Son, Wisdom, Angel, God, Lord,

* A learned author remarks respecting John i. 3, 10, Col. i. 16; "The preposition DIA, in these passages translated BY, does not signify *by any one as an original cause*, (for this sense is expressed by a different preposition, HYPO,) but it denotes THROUGH ANY THING AS AN INSTRUMENT." "Eusebius—the learned, accurate, and laborious author—who could not possibly be mistaken about the common meaning of two prepositions, which he used daily and hourly in conversation and in books, explaining the commencement of John's gospel, uses these words: "And when he says, in one place, (ver. 10.) that the *world*, and in another (ver. 3) that *all things*, were made *through him*, he declares the ministration of the Word to God. For, when the Evangelist might have said, "All things were made *by* him;" and again, "The world was made *by* him;" he has not said (HYPO) "*By* him," but (DIA) "Through him;" in order that he might raise our conceptions to the underived power of the Father as the original cause of all things."* Lastly, the same distinction is noticed by Philo, the Jew, who was contemporary with our Savior, who wrote in Greek, and in several parts of his writings expresses the difference between a supreme and a subordinate creator by the opposed use of these two prepositions. See Wetstein's Note on John i. 3." If this criticism were not correct, it would still be true that GOD created all things by Jesus Christ. Eph. iii. 9; Heb. i. 2.

† Historical Views of Heresies, p. 76. ‡ Ibid. p. 69.

§ Stuart's Letters to Miller, p. 19.

* Eusebius Eccles. Theol. Lib. 1. c. 20.

Logos. All the above names he bears, because he *ministers to the will of the Father, and was begotten by the will of the Father.*"* Clemens Alexandrinus says, "There is one unbegotten being, the Almighty God. And there is one begotten before all things, by whom all things were made." He also calls the Logos "*the first created wisdom;*" and he "who approximates the nearest to the *only Almighty.*" "The *older by birth,*" &c.†

Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, a little after the middle of the second century, says, "The Son of God is *created and made*—and as he is a created being, he existed not before he was made." Again: "God was not always Father; the Son was not always; but the supreme God was once without the Logos, and the Son was not, before he was begotten; for he is not eternal, but came into being afterwards."‡ Lucian, a presbyter of Antioch at the close of the third century, asserts that he was begotten before all ages, (or worlds,) and that he was "the first born of every creature."§ Methodius, bishop of Tyre about the end of the third century, calls the Logos "the first begotten of God."‖ Novatian says, "God the Father—creator—unoriginated, invisible, immense, immortal, eternal, the only God—from whom, *when he pleased*, the Word his Son was born."¶

Is it possible for language to express more fully, that these primitive christians did not believe that the one Almighty God consists of a trinity of persons? Is is possible for words to declare more explicitly, that the Word or Son, is, in his highest nature, a distinct being from the Father, and dependent on him for all things? "The first born of every creature," and most glorious of all dependent intelligences.

The piety of Mr. Isaac Watts, "whose praise is in the churches," will not be doubted. Few persons have studied the important and interesting subject discussed in these pages with the humility, diligence and prayer which he did. In his researches after truth, he clearly perceived that the word of God teaches that our dear Savior existed in a glorious state, but *inferior to the Father*, BEFORE he "was made flesh." To reconcile this truth with the supreme deity of Jesus Christ, he adopted the theory of the pre-existence of Christ's human soul. On farther examination, it appears he was convinced that the doctrine of Christ's supreme deity is unscriptural; for in his last

* Stuart's Letters to Miller, p. 23. † Ibid. 44, 45. ‡ Ibid. 53.
§ Ibid. 54. ‖ Ibid. 55. ¶ Ibid. 58.

letter to Mr. Colman of Boston, dated Feb. 11, 1747, he says, "I think I have said every thing concerning the SON OF GOD, which scripture says; but I could not go so far as to say with some of our orthodox divines, that the SON is *equal* with the FATHER; because our Lord himself expressly says, "My Father is *greater* than I."* About the same period, some pious christians in England believed what was called the "*indwelling scheme*;" which is, that the Son is supreme Deity *by the union or indwelling of the Father*, who is the only true God, with the man Christ Jesus: and that there are no distinct persons in the Godhead. This scheme implies that the Word or Son had no existence whatever, distinct from the Father, before he appeared on earth, and is, consequently, opposed to innumerable passages of scripture.

Few men have been more justly esteemed for correct views, and perspicuous illustration of divine truth, than Andrew Fuller. In mature age, he wrote a very convincing essay on the *Sonship of Christ*: in which, I think, he clearly proves, that the terms SON OF GOD, ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, are expressive of the highest nature, and most glorious character of the "WORD." He indeed considered these terms as importing supreme Deity and perfect equality, ONE THING EXCEPTED. This will unavoidably follow from his views. He says, "*in the order of nature, the Father must have existed before the Son.*"† Here, then, is a striking proof that it is impossible for the greatest minds to avoid falling into inconsistency, when they embrace error. If, as Mr. Fuller says, "the Father and the Son are *properly eternal*;" we may as well say, that in the order of nature, the Son must have existed before the Father, as to say, that the Father must have existed before the Son. Nothing could have existed *in any sense*, BEFORE that which is *properly eternal*, because that which is properly eternal can have no beginning. Besides, if the Son is eternal as the Father, there must be TWO ETERNAL SPIRITS, which is contrary to scripture and reason.

Mr. Stuart, whose talents command our respect, and whose piety and candor excite our affection and esteem, has furnished us with a similar example. After all he has written, he is obliged to acknowledge that the Son, in respect to his highest nature, *is not "in all respects," the same being as the Father.* He must, consequently,

*Memoirs of Watts and Doddridge, Boston edit. 1793, p. 29.
† Fuller's Essays, p 134.

in one respect at least, be a distinct being from the Father; and as certainly *dependent* upon him, as that there cannot be two distinct independent beings. I apprehend that one principal cause why many pious persons do not perceive the revealed truth on this subject is, an impression that the more firmly they believe, and the more positively they affirm, that Jesus Christ is the supreme Deity, the more they manifest their love to him. Let our Lord's answer to Peter, when he said, "Be it far from thee," be seriously and candidly considered. Peter undoubtedly felt a sincere regard for his Savior, and was *influenced by this very regard*; to wish that he might escape from those sufferings he spake of. But as Peter's zeal was "*not according to knowledge*," and his affectionate feelings were expressed in a manner *inconsistent with truth*, he received the severe rebuke of his Master. Now, I solemnly ask, if we follow the example of Peter, and affirm any thing of Jesus Christ which is contrary to truth; is not the answer of our Lord, as applicable, in some degree, to us, as it was to him? If, to the declaration of the Son of God, "My Father is greater than I," we reply, "Be it far from thee, Lord," must not our erroneous zeal be, "an offence" to the holy mind of him who assures us, "*I honor my Father,—I seek not my own glory*?" And if the sincerity and affection of the apostle, (which surely was not less than ours,) did not screen him from the severe rebuke of our Lord, can we expect to escape his censure?

In concluding, let us review a few of the passages discussed in the preceding pages, and contrast them with Trinitarian sentiments. I am sensible that *error* as well as *truth* may receive *apparent* support by this method; but this is only when the most obvious and literal import of a passage is not according to the general analogy of the scriptures. Whether that is the case or not with the following, the candid reader will judge.

Jesus Christ and his Apostles.	Trinitarians.
To us there is but one God, *the Father*. 1 Cor. viii. 6.	To us, there is but one God, the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost.
My Father is greater than I. John xiv. 28.	The Son is as great as the Father.
Who is the *image* of the invisible God, the first born of every *creature*. Col. i. 15.	Who is the invisible God, the uncreated Jehovah.
The Son can do nothing of himself. John v. 19.	The Son is omnipotent.

JESUS CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.	TRINITARIANS.
But of that day, &c. knoweth no man, no not the angels, &c. *neither the Son*, but the Father. Mark xiii. 32.	The Son is omniscient, and knew of that day as well as the Father.
All power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth. Matthew xxviii. 18.	No *given* power can qualify the Son of God to give eternal life to his people.
As thou hast *given* him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. John xvii. 2.	
God, who created all things BY Jesus Christ. Eph. iii. 9.	Jesus Christ created all things by his own independent power.
BY whom also he made the worlds. Heb. i. 2.	
The Revelation of Jesus Christ *which God gave unto him.* Rev. i. 1.	The Revelation of Jesus Christ from his own omniscience.
For there is one God, and one Mediator *between* God and men, the man Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy ii. 5.	There is one Mediator between God and man; who is also supreme God and man in one person.
Denying the *only* Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 4.	Denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who is also the only Lord God, and a distinct person.
Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and signs, and wonders *which God did by him.* Acts ii. 22.	Jesus performed his miracles by his own omnipotence.
For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he *given* to the Son to have life in himself. John v. 26.	The son is self-existent.
I live by the Father. John vi. 57.	The son lives by himself.
This is my beloved Son. Matt. iii. 17.	This is the only true God, the same numerical essence as the Father.
That they might know thee *the only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. John xvii. 3.	That they might know thee, who art *not* the only true God, in distinction from the Word whom thou hast sent.
That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord *to the glory of God the Father.* Phil. ii. 11.	That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord *to his own glory,*

The fact that our divine Redeemer is *called* by *some* of the names of the Father, is considered by many as evidence that he is that VERY BEING whose SON he is declared to be. They appear to have forgotten, that it was a common Hebrew custom to give significant names both to persons and places. Jesus Christ was called by the name of DAVID. Was he therefore the identical son of

Jesse? John the Baptist was called Elijah. Mal. iv. 5. Was he therefore *the very same being?* If it was proper that the forerunner of our Lord should be called by this name, (which signifies God the Lord) because he came, "in the spirit and power of Elias," surely, it was proper that our blessed Lord himself should be *called* by some of the names of the invisible Father, in whose spirit and power he came down from heaven, and of whom he is *by nature* "the express image."

Some presume to derive an argument for the Supreme Deity of the Son, from the fact of his being associated with the Father as an object of worship, and from the fact of his being associated with him in the baptismal formula. The inconclusiveness of such reasoning is manifest from the facts that the king of Israel, 1 Chron. xxix, 20, is associated with Jehovah as an object of worship, and that the Israelites were baptised into (eis) Moses. 1 Cor. x, 2. See also, Ex. xiv. 31, 1 Sam. xii. 18.

To show the puerility of the argument of Mr. Jones, Mr. Wardlaw and others, derived from the plural word Elohim, it is only necessary to quote the following from Wilson's Hebrew grammar, p 270. "Words that express dominion, dignity, majesty, are commonly put in the plural." See Ex. xxi, 4. Is. xix, 4. Mal. i. 6. Bush observes "the use of the plural in such cases seems to be merely for the purpose of giving to the word greater fulness," &c. If it were not so, how could it prove a plurality of *persons* and not a plurality of *Gods* when the term itself is Gods? "The plural term *Gods*, Elohim, is used of one of the persons alone. *Thy throne*, O Gods, *is forever and ever.* And, *O Gods, thy Gods have anointed thee.*—Now unless Christ, the *Son*, have another Trinity in him, the plural word cannot intend three persons, but one; only it is more majestic."

1. Tim. iii. 16. The original, according to Griesbach, is *who*, or *which*, was manifested in the flesh, &c.*

Some have affirmed that the design of John in writing his Gospel was to establish the doctrine of the supreme deity of Jesus Christ. Let us hear the apostle himself.

* Micah. 5. 2. I am informed, by a learned Trinitarian, that "the words translated 'come forth' and 'goings forth' are of the same derivation, forms of the same verb. The term is used in the sense of *origin or descent.*" Consequently, the idea that Christ is unoriginated or self-existent is excluded by this term, which accords with the plain scriptural truth that he is *begotten* of the Father. The term "everlasting," must be understood, as in many other passages, in a limited sense, for that which is strictly from eternity could have no "*origin or descent.*"

Of all the things "written in this book," he says, "But these are written, that ye might believe *that Jesus is the Christ*, THE SON OF GOD, and that believing ye might have life through his name." John xx. 30, 31.

1 John v. 20. is considered by Mr. Wardlaw, as proof of the Supreme Deity of the Son of God, because "Jesus Christ" is the *immediate* antecedent to the words, "This is the true God." He acknowledges, however, that the immediate antecedent is not *always* the proper one; and notices as proof, Acts iv. 10, 11, where the immediate antecedent to the words, "This is the stone," is the healed man, who certainly was not the stone spoken of. If the word God is read in the passage, as the sense requires, and as Macknight translates it, it will be as follows; And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is the true God; and we are in the true God, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. It must be conceded that the words in our translation, "him that is true," do, in both cases, refer to the Father. Is it not then, most agreeable to the connection, to consider the words, "This is the true God," as referring to the same? And does not the declaration of Christ himself, that the Father is "the only true God," John xvii. 3, require this construction?

If the words, "This is the true God," refer to Jesus Christ, then the passage manifestly teaches the absurdity that the true God has a father, from whom he has derived his existence, for it declares that Jesus Christ is the Son of him that is true. Compare 2d Ep. of John, verse 7. To an unbiased mind, I think that it would appear equally plain that the words "him that is true" are the *proper* antecedent to the words, "this is the true God," as that the word "deceivers" is the *proper* antecedent to the words, "this is a deceiver and an antichrist," although Jesus Christ is the *immediate* antecedent in both cases.

He that *spared not* his OWN SON, but *delivered him up* for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Rom. viii. 32. How forcible is the argument! how consolatory the truth, which the inspired apostle addresses to his holy brethren in this passage, if we understand it agreeable to the views I advocate! It is presumed that none will deny that the terms "*spared not*," "*delivered him up*," signify *real suffering*. But what does the apostle mean, if *humanity only* suffered? How does it follow that God will give us ALL THINGS, because

he has given *a single man* to suffer for us? What proportionate value does a *single holy man* bear to the ALL THINGS, which an infinite God is capable of imparting? Such a sentiment entirely invalidates the apostle's argument, and deprives the church of the most precious proof of God's everalating love! Surely, the apostle must have had very different conceptions of the dying Savior, when he exclaimed, "Thanks be to God for HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT!" O my brethren, had we seen the affecting spectacle on Mount Calvary! had we witnessed nature's convulsions, the heavens gathering blackness, the rocks rending, and the veil of the holy temple rent in twain! should we not have been convinced with the astonished centurion, that something more than *humanity* had expired?

I object, then, to the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead: First, Because *it is not revealed in the scriptures of truth.* There is not a single passage in the whole volume of divine revelation that declares either expressly or implicitly, that there are three persons in one God. There is not a single passage which reveals that the one God consists of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I object to the doctrine, Secondly, Because it is not only *not* revealed, but *the contrary is most plainly declared in the divine testimony.* We are therein assured, not only that there is but one God, but that this one God is THE FATHER. The FATHER, as "*the only true God,*" is as plainly distinguished from the Son as from all other beings.

I object to the doctrine, Thirdly, Because I find the divine testimony of the Father, the Son, the prophets and the apostles, *unitedly declaring the inferiority of the Son in his highest nature and character.*

I object to the doctrine, Fourthly, Because, *it is not simply* ABOVE *reason,* but CONTRARY *to every rational faculty, I possess.* It is impossible for me to conceive of three persons, *in any sense,* without conceiving of three beings. It is impossible for me to think of one glorious Spirit on the throne of the universe, and of one glorious Spirit *at the right hand of him* who sitteth on the throne, without thinking of two distinct glorious Spirits.

I object to the doctrine, Fifthly, Because, *it presents no adequate mediator* BETWEEN *God and man.* All those sufferings which *constitute the ground of atonement,* are according to this doctrine MERELY HUMAN.

I object to this doctrine, Finally, Because, *it excludes*

from the universe the most glorious of all beings, God only excepted, If we should admit that the *immutable* Jehovah, at a certain period added to his being human nature, which is to be united with him "in one person for ever;" after all that can be said, we can have no idea of the SON OF GOD in distinction from the Father: certainly none, except that of a *mere perfect man.* Thus the most mighty and glorious of Jehovah's works; "the image of the invisible God; "the first-born of every creature;" the well beloved and only begotten of the Father, the joy of earth, and the glory of heaven, is blotted out of existence. And for this mighty loss, what is substituted? NOTHING. For, beyond all controversy, there can be but ONE supreme God. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." I cast my anxious eye around the universe, and most solicitously enquire, where is he who is "the beginning of the creation of God;" "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person?" Where is "the Word of God," who "was with God," and enjoyed glory with him "before the world was?" And where is he to whom every knee is commanded to bow, and whom the thousands of thousands of the heavenly hosts do actually worship *in distinction* from him that sitteth on the throne? Rev. v. 13. To this interesting enquiry, the system I am opposing gives me no satisfactory answer. In that system, the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, by which the INFINITE generates, illumines and blesses the whole intelligent universe, has no place. I reject it, therefore, because, in addition to other insuperable objections, it involves a loss of being in the universe, more to be dreaded than the loss of all other created intelligences.

In closing this imperfect essay, I can sincerely adopt the language of Mr. Stuart, though with an important difference of views. "*With all this subject fully before me, I do not hesitate; I cannot doubt respecting it.*" A flood of evidence has flowed into my mind from the sacred pages, which is irresistible and overwhelming. I have a humble confidence that what I have written is conformable to "the first principles of the oracles of God." In view of the whole of the divine testimony, I am constrained to say, with the inspired apostle, "*There is but one God,* THE FATHER." Such, however, are my views of my divine Savior, that "when my departing spirit shall quit these mortal scenes, and wing its way to the world un-

known; with my latest breath I desire to pray, as the expiring martyr did, 'LORD JESUS, RECEIVE MY SPIRIT.'"

I feel in some measure the awful responsibility I am under, while offering these pages to the public. It is indeed a small thing to be judged of man's judgment. It is comparatively, of little importance to receive the commendation or displeasure of "a man that shall die." But it is a solemn and important truth, that, for what I have written I am accountable to Him who holds the eternal destinies of all his intelligent creatures in his hands, and who "will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or whether it be evil." If, while I have sincerely desired to know the truth, I have erred, I pray for forgiveness, for the sake of that precious Savior, who, I hope, hath loved me and given himself for me. Could I imagine that what I have written is displeasing in his holy sight, the commendation of the whole world, could not in the least degree, alleviate the grief such an apprehension would occasion. I think I can on mature reflection say, death would be preferable to publishing erroneous doctrine concerning my Lord. If any person will prove from "the word of the Lord," that I have misunderstood the divine testimony, on this important and highly interesting subject; I hope, by the grace of God, that I shall cheerfully retract what I have written.

And now, dear reader, permit me for the truth's sake, to entreat you to examine *seriously*, *diligently*, *impartially* and *prayerfully*, the word of eternal truth. Beware lest you reject the counsel of God. God forbid that any should trifle with this subject, and make it the theme of mere speculation. It is lamentable indeed to observe the little interest many precious souls feel respecting truths of infinite importance. The attention of many to these truths, alas! is nothing more than what is excited by a vain curiosity and carnal speculation. May divine grace save us from this condemnation. Let us solemnly remember that the glorious Savior whose character is imperfectly delineated in these pages, will soon appear in the clouds of heaven; we shall soon behold him coming in all his glorious majesty to judge US. Oh, may we NOW so believe in him, love and obey him, that we may THEN lift up our heads with joy, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh.

"Unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the ONLY WISE GOD, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

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