

1607/901.

THE DUTY OF CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE

PRIMARY VISITATION

OF THE MOST REVEREND

J O H N

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

I N T H E

CATHEDRAL AND METROPOLITICAL CHURCH,

ON SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1786.

By GEORGE HORNE, D. D.

DEAN OF CANTERBURY,

AND PRESIDENT OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN COLLEGE,  
O X F O R D.

TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED

A

D I S C O U R S E

O N T H E

TRINITY IN UNITY.

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A NEW EDITION.

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L O N D O N :

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PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

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TO THE MOST REVEREND

J O H N

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

A N D

METROPOLITAN OF ALL ENGLAND,

T H I S S E R M O N,

P U B L I S H E D

IN OBEDIENCE TO HIS GRACE'S COMMAND,

IS MOST HUMBL Y I N S C R I B E D.

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## J U D E, V E R S E 3.

BELOVED, WHEN I GAVE ALL DILIGENCE TO WRITE UNTO YOU OF THE COMMON SALVATION, IT WAS NEEDFUL FOR ME TO WRITE UNTO YOU, AND EXHORT YOU THAT YOU SHOULD CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

**I**T has been a doubt among expositors, whether by the terms "common salvation," and the "faith once delivered to the faints," the Apostle intended different things, or the same thing differently expressed. The latter seems most probable. "The faith once delivered to the faints" seems necessarily to involve in it "the common salvation." But as this is a matter of no great consequence, it shall not detain us from the consideration of that which certainly is such, the duty here so evidently enjoined of "contending for the faith." To take in the whole subject, and discuss it as fully as the time usually allowed to an exercise of this kind will permit, it may be expedient to bestow some reflections on the OBJECT to be contended for; the NECESSITY of contending for it; and the MANNER in which the contention should be carried on.

**B**

I. The

I. The object to be contended for is, “the faith once delivered.” A question is at present warmly agitated amongst us—What that faith is? A question somewhat extraordinary at this time of day; but certainly no trifling one; since either our opponents are guilty of degrading and dishonouring the Son of God and the Holy Spirit; or the Christian Church has been guilty of idolatry, from the very days of the Apostles. This faith, as we say, is that system of truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures concerning the dispensations of the God whom we adore, and into whose name we were baptized; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; three persons, in one God. These truths are proposed to us as the ground of our hope, our comfort, and our joy; as the principles on which the conduct of life is to be framed, accepted, and rewarded. We receive the Revelation which contains the truths, upon that plenary and satisfactory evidence vouchsafed us of its authenticity; and we receive the truths which it contains, on the authority of the Revealer. There can be no better reason for receiving them, when that Revealer is God. Ignorance and malice have sometimes pronounced faith to be want of sense; but, surely, there is as little sense in withholding assent when it ought to be given, as in giving it when it ought to be withholden.

The different articles of our belief, dispersed in the Scriptures, were very early collected in summaries,



summaries, styled Creeds, recited at baptism, and constituting thenceforth the badge and test of a man's profession\*.

By a formulary of this kind, the catechumen himself was instructed; the faith, once delivered, transmitted down to posterity; the members of the spiritual society were kept together; the doctrines by them believed and taught, made known to the world, and distinguished from a multitude of heterogeneous and erroneous opinions, by them disclaimed; a connection with the maintainers of which would justly have brought discredit on themselves and their cause.

For these reasons, the use of Creeds appears to have been at first introduced, and since continued. They who have at any time thought proper to depart from such as were established in the body to which they originally belonged, soon found it necessary to establish some of their own. The Arians, rejecting that agreed upon at Nice, drew up successively many others; I

\* Nothing can be stronger for the doctrine of the Trinity, as one of its ablest advocates justly observes, than that the most ancient Creeds should have been comprized (for so many learned men, upon good grounds, have conceived that they were comprized) in these few words: "I believe in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" since it is declaring the Sacred Three to be One God; and no man who had been baptized according to this form, could be ignorant of the doctrine.—See Waterland's *Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, with the authors there referred to, p. 223.

think, not fewer than seventeen, in the space of forty years. And remarkable are the words of Mosheim concerning the Socinians: “ They  
 “ dreaded the effects of intestine discord, which  
 “ portended the ruin of their community, be-  
 “ fore it could arrive at any measure of stability  
 “ or consistence. This apprehension was too  
 “ well founded; for, as yet, they had agreed  
 “ upon no regular system of principles, which  
 “ might serve as a center and bond of union.  
 “ A summary of their religious doctrine was  
 “ first published in the year 1574. Their sys-  
 “ tem, afterwards changed and new-modelled,  
 “ required a new confession of faith, to make  
 “ known its principles, and give a clear and  
 “ full account of its present state. A new  
 “ form was drawn up by Socinus himself, and  
 “ styled the RACOVIAN CATECHISM, which is  
 “ still considered as the CONFESSIO OF FAITH  
 “ of the whole sect.” \*

The true question therefore concerning Creeds seems to be, not whether any shall be imposed, but who shall be the imposers? Now, let us only suppose, that the direction of ecclesiastical matters in this kingdom should pass into the hands of those persons, who regard the doctrine of the Trinity as involving in it an absurdity equal to that of Transubstantiation, and as being the grand obstacle to the conversion

\* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. Cent. xvi. Sect. 111. Part ii. Chap. iv. § 9.

of Jews, Mahometans, and Deists; who deem the worship of Christ to be gross idolatry, and high treason against the majesty of the one supreme God; must not the new unitarian church, with its confession and services, be so constituted, as utterly and for ever to exclude us from becoming members of it? Most undoubtedly, and of necessity, it must. “An Unitarian people (we are told) will not long be satisfied with a Trinitarian establishment.” Indeed, I suppose they will not; they will endeavour to overturn it: and it is our business to prevent them from so doing.

The reasoning that has been so often employed against the propriety of decisions by fallible men, seems itself to be a fallacy, confuted by common sense, matter of fact, and universal experience. A society of fallible men will always decide for themselves: they must do so; they must do the best they can. Another society of fallible men will decide differently. Individuals must likewise decide for themselves, to which society they will be united, or whether they will be united to either: and all must bear with one another. The nature of the case seems to admit of no other method.

In the mean time, the unitarians should consider, that we may be as firmly persuaded of the truth of our doctrines, as they can be of the truth of theirs. They should do us the justice to believe that we are so; that we do not see the absurdities imputed to us; nor when

we teach the doctrine of three PERSONS, intend to teach that of three GODS. \*

Some, once our brethren in the faith, have forsaken it, and gone out from us. We lament—we must lament—their defection; but we cannot help it. They have sacrificed their preferment to that which we think to be their error. What they have done cannot prove error to be truth; it proves the sincerity of their persuasion; and, as in the course of the controversy, we apprehend, has been made to appear, the weakness of their judgment.

Should a minister of the unitarian church, at any future time, by reading the writings of English and French philosophers, be seduced first to doubt, and then to disbelieve the existence of the God, whose worship, as a minister, he is obliged to conduct; and, upon that ground, relinquish his establishment, though the principal means of supporting himself and a family—the case is possible—what must they say, from whose society he thus excommunicates himself? Not that the tenet is right, but that the man is wrong.

\* Crellius himself is candid enough to acknowledge, that the doctrine of three persons in one and the same individual essence does not constitute real and perfect tritheism; because of the close and inseparable union between them. See the passage cited in Stillingfleet on the Sufferings of Christ, Part ii. near the end. Vol. iii. p. 407. of his works in folio.

Loud

Loud were the calls for an alteration of our forms, some years ago, from men, and very learned men, of the Arian opinion, who never once thought of denying the pre-existence of Christ, the miraculous conception, the plenary inspiration of the apostles, and of Christ himself, (for even that is now denied,) the immortality of the soul, or the spiritual nature of the Deity. Had an alteration then taken place, it must now have been succeeded by another; as the principal of our present opponents has devised quite a different system, and seems to entertain a more favourable opinion of us than of the Arians.\* But be this as it may, we shall be greatly blameable, if we part with our Creeds, till our adversaries are better agreed what shall be substituted in their room; and till we are assured, that the remedy proposed will not be much worse than the disease under which they imagine us to labour. † Till that  
period

\* “ The Arians are even less entitled to the appellation of *unitarians* than the Athanasians, who also lay claim to it.” *History of Early Opinions, &c.* I. 81. See the Preface, p. 15.

† “ It is an easy matter for men of wit and fancy to find fault with any thing! but it requires thought and judgment to settle things upon their true bottom. Let those who are displeased with the received doctrine, shew us a better, and form any other consistent scheme, (consistent with Scripture and with itself,) if they can. Wise and good men will be always willing to reform, if there be cause for it; but they will not be forward to pull down what appears to be founded on a rock, in

period shall arrive, there will be a necessity of  
 “contending for the faith delivered to us.”

II. There is something very unpleasing in the sound of the word CONTENTION, and volumes have been written on the offence occasioned by the thing itself. But, alas! it is one of those offences, which, I fear, “must needs come.” Till the sons of Adam cease to be the sons of Adam, it cannot be prevented. So long, on one plea or another, the city will be attacked; and if attacked, it must be defended: the sentinel at his post cannot be blamed for

“order only to build upon the sand. The Trinitarians  
 “have some satisfaction in observing, how long certain  
 “great wits have been employed in new-modelling Chris-  
 “tianity, and have not yet been able to agree in any one  
 “certain scheme.”—Thus, while Dr. Priestley with so  
 much earnestness and vehemence is pressing upon us the  
 Socinian scheme, the author of *Ben Mordecai's Apology*  
 laughs at the idea of settling the Christian faith by recti-  
 fying “a Greek particle in Justin's Trypho, or ransack-  
 “ing antiquity for the opinions of the Nazarenes, Mi-  
 “neans, and Ebionites;” calling upon us to attend to  
*his* doctrine of “a visible and inferior Jehovah.” See  
 the Preface to his second edition, p. v.—The woman men-  
 tioned in Prov. xiv. 1. is not mentioned as the wisest of  
 women, who “plucked down her house with her own  
 “hands,” to save others the trouble. Should we ever be  
 persuaded to do like her, instead of the kingdom of God  
 immediately appearing, (which some seem to think would  
 be the case,) a very Babel would arise in consequence. If  
 the experience of the last century cannot make us wise,  
 most certain it is, that we shall never become so. When  
 a man deceives me once, says the Italian proverb, it is  
 HIS fault; when twice, it is MINE.

giving

giving the alarm, nor the garrison for appearing under arms. All that can be done in this contest, as well as others, is to provide, that it be conducted in an honourable way, according to the laws of war. "If it be possible," says an Apostle, "as far as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." \* Cases, it is therefore supposed, may happen, in which it will not be possible. It is not in our power to "live peaceably with all men," if some men will not live peaceably with us. We must not be the aggressors; we must not engage knowingly in a bad cause; nor persevere, if, in the process, we shall discover our cause to be a bad one.

Wonder has been often expressed, that Religion should ever have become the subject of contention. But the wonder would cease, if it were only considered, that things become the subjects of contention in proportion to their importance; and Religion being the most important thing in the world, they who are serious in their Religion will never suffer it to be taken from them, without contention. The fault is not in Religion, but in the different understandings, tempers, interests, passions, and prejudices of mankind. He who can rectify and adjust all these, will put an end to contention. Till this shall be effected, there will be heresies. The Apostle uses a stronger term; "there

\* Rom. xii. 18.

“ must be heresies:” \* and therefore, such as are able must combat them, and maintain the doctrines, to which they oppose themselves. The truths of God are not to be tamely given up. The injunction is, “ Contend.” The Apostles contended against the Jews, Pagans, and the Heresiarchs of their days. The fathers of the church contended against the same enemies, and others who arose in succession after them. The heroes of the Reformation contended against the Romish corruptors of the faith: the bishops, clergy, and others of our own church, have contended against adversaries of various denominations; and, if we expect that church to subsist, we must contend too.

It has been hinted to us, in some late publications, that if the Trinitarian doctrines should continue to be obstinately maintained, the churches which maintain them, and the kingdoms in which such churches are supported, will, ere long, be destroyed, to make way for the pure unitarian Gospel. This is a very serious and alarming intimation indeed; for a zealous Antitrinitarian may fancy, that those idolatrous churches and kingdoms require to be quickened in their progress towards destruction: he may conceive himself in duty bound to become an instrument in executing the vengeance of heaven upon them, for refusing to

\* 1 Cor. xi. 19.

admit an Arian or Socinian reformation, tendered in a milder way. When "the faith," by us esteemed that "delivered to the saints," is represented as the "abomination which maketh desolate," surely it must be high time either to give it up at once, if it be such; or to contend for it, if it be not.

Our opponents are shrewd, active, busy, bustling, and indefatigable. They regard the toleration not as leave only to exercise their own religion unmolested, but as a door opened to unlimited free enquiry, or, in other words, a full permission to attack the church in every possible way. They dare us to put in execution the laws which are still subsisting against the impugners of certain received articles of faith, enacted by those who were indubitably friends to toleration in general. They represent any human establishment, as such, to be a part of the Grand Apostacy; and wish to strip religion, that is, our religion, of the support and protection derived from its connection with the state. They inform us, that the nation abounds with Socinians, at present concealed, but ready, on a proper occasion, to declare that a mine is laid under the old building of error and superstition, which a single spark may, and probably soon will, inflame, so as to produce an instantaneous explosion; in consequence of which, that edifice, the erection of which has been the work of ages, may be overturned in a moment, and so effectually, as that

the same foundation can never be built upon again. Without any visible marks of decay, and before its bigotted friends suspect any danger, it may vanish, we are told, like a castle in romance. \*

If this information be just, we are under no small obligation to the person by whom it has been communicated. It is fair, it is manly, it is noble, it is kind! and we must blame ourselves alone, if the caverns be not forthwith searched, and the combustibles removed. But what a man wishes, he easily believes; and great, as we all know, is the power of a lively imagination. We will therefore indulge a hope, that the above state of facts may not be quite exact; however, in process of time it may possibly be realized, unless proper measures shall be taken on our side; unless we "contend."

The necessity of contending for the faith being thus evident, we are to consider

\* See Dr. Priestley's *Importance of Free Enquiry*, p. 39, 40. It is somewhat remarkable, that, in a sermon written and preached above four years ago, a friend of mine, aware of that "gunpowder," which Dr. Priestley and his friends (as he tells us) have been for some time employed in "laying, grain by grain, under the old building," spoke then of "a mine, waiting, perhaps, only till some unforeseen occurrence should kindle it, to destroy, at one tremendous explosion, the constitution in church and state."—These were his very words; as if he had been the bearer of the lanthorn, while the Doctor was at work.

III. The

III. The manner in which that contention should be carried on.

When I say, **CONTEND**, I do not mean, by pains and penalties. Such we may inflict upon our adversaries; and, if they get into power, (which, as they seem to think, will pretty soon be the case,) they may inflict upon us. But by proceedings of this kind nothing is proved. The faith is apostolical; the contention should be so likewise. The weapons of our warfare must be Scripture and History, Reason and Argument. By these the cause must be defended. By these it has hitherto been defended, and the invaders have left many strong forts behind them, untaken. We have seen nothing, as yet, which should induce us to depart from the doctrines of our Lord's Pre-existence, Divinity, and Satisfaction, and to adopt the interpretations of Scripture devised by the Socinians; which, of all the interpretations at any time offered to the world, seem to be the farthest from **RATIONAL** \* :—a distinction to which persons of that persuasion have of late claimed a kind of exclusive right.

\* “ Cannot one know (says an excellent writer, thoroughly conversant in these subjects) that the Socinian interpretation of John i. 1. and Heb. i. 10. or of the texts relating to Christ's pre-existence, is not the mind of Scripture? Yea, one may know it as certainly, as that a counter is not the king's coin, or that a monster is not a man.”

But,

But, though pains and penalties are out of the question, we are not to be remiss and lukewarm in the contest; we must “contend earnestly.” The word used by St. Jude, *επαγωνιζεσθαι*, refers us to the severe struggles of the champions in the Grecian games. The same allusion, upon the same subject, is employed in the Epistle to the Philippians. “Stand fast in one Spirit, with one mind striving together, *συναθλωντες*, wrestling together, for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries.” \*— Firmness and intrepidity become the warrior in the day of battle. An appearance of timidity and irresolution will give the enemy occasion to say, that we are not sincere; that we distrust the goodness of the cause in which we are engaged. The spectators of the combat will easily be led to think so, and fall off to the adverse party. Of two contrary opinions, men may be at liberty to profess either: but both are not therefore true. In a matter of so much moment, neutrality must be criminal. “Why halt ye?” says the prophet. In other words, “Use your judgment; chuse your side; and adhere to it, till you see good reason to the contrary.” It is easy to foretell the issue of a conflict, if all be activity on one part, and indolence on the other. Athanasius once stood single against the world, and prevailed. But

\* Phil. i. 27.

the faithful have not yet so far ceased from among us. Numbers of great, good, and able men are left, sound in faith, and mighty in the Scriptures. A field worthy of their abilities and attainments is open before them, and there are many adversaries. Some opinions may be safely trusted with the public; they will die away of themselves: but others are of a nature so flattering to human pride, so congenial to the prejudices of an age long trained to despise mysteries, and propagated with so much industry, management, and confidence—that they ought to be withstood.\* Tares will be sown, if the husbandman sleep; and he may be astonished, when he awakes, to behold the luxuriance of their growth. No mischief will arise from discussion. Truth always has been, and always will be, a gainer by it. It is a wholesome exercise for us: it excites attention, and prevents **INDIFFERENCE**, the enemy, of all others, most to be dreaded.

But while zeal is recommended, let not charity be forgotten. They are by no means incompatible. Who more zealous than the great **Apostle of the Gentiles?** and where can be

\* They *have* been withstood, and *well* withstood. The thanks of the Church of England are due to **Dr. HORSLEY**, for his seasonable, learned, and judicious writings in her defence. Let him occupy the department he is so thoroughly qualified to fill, and go on frustrating the attempts of our adversaries to deprive us of the argument from tradition.

found a brighter example of charity? Boldly confuting and reproving false doctrines, and corrupt practices; but ever ready to devote himself for the welfare of those among whom they prevailed. After his own example, he directs others to be *αληθευοντες εν αγαπη*, to “speak the truth in love\*,” so to maintain truth, as not to violate charity. A golden precept, worthy to be engraven on the hearts of all who may be called forth to “contend for the faith;” that they may do honour to their cause by the arguments proposed, and no dishonour to themselves by the manner of proposing them. The weight of the reasons will not be at all diminished by the courteousness of the address: in its effect it will be much increased. Mankind care not to be driven; they must be led into all truth. It was the method practised by the Apostles; it should be practised by their successors. Thus, and thus only, they are to “heap coals of fire on the heads†” of their opponents. The dross will separate, and the metal flow pure. Logic should be used without acrimony; and wit, if it be used at all, tempered with good humour, so as not to exasperate the person who is the object of it; and then, we are sure, there is no mischief done. The disputant ought to be at once firm and calm; his head cool, and his heart warm. Thus a controversy sometimes begins;

\* Ephes. iv. 15.

† Rom. xii. 20.

but thus, alas! it seldom ends; the irascible passions being generally excited, and full utterance given to them in its progress: allowance must therefore be made, on all sides, for the failings of humanity. That the *OBIVM THEOLOGICUM* exceeds every other, is said, perhaps, without sufficient reason. The vehemence of a contest will be in proportion to its supposed importance, the length of its continuance, or the frequency of its repetition. When men are earnest, in short, they are apt sometimes to be violent. Our adversaries have taken to themselves and their opinions the epithet of *LIBERAL*, as well as that of *RATIONAL*. It may be with equal reason; for why it is more liberal to deny, than it is to affirm, the doctrine of the Trinity, seems hard to say: and some pages might easily be filled with language concerning that doctrine, employed by the Polonian fraternity, which would make every ear in this audience to tingle.\*

There is another property which one would most devoutly wish a controversy to possess, namely, brevity. A great book, in this way, is indeed a great evil, if the point can be settled in a small one. The superfluity of naughtiness should be cut off; all flourish and declamation, self-adulation and personal altercation, rhetorical amplification and digression, every

\* Plenty of it may be seen in that useful work—Dr. Jonathan Edwards's *Preservative against Socinianism*.

sentence not immediately *ad rem*, as useless and noxious excrescences, pared away ; that point discovered, on which the dispute turns, and the opponent closely confined to it.\* Terms should be defined, to prevent ambiguity and evasion ; arguments and objections carefully collected, and methodically arranged, stated and answered with all possible conciseness and perspicuity, leaving as little room as may be

\* In doing this, no disputant, perhaps, ever excelled Mr. Leslie. “ The polemical skill of a Leslie,” is an expression of Bolingbroke. A clergyman’s library should not be without this author’s Theological Works in two volumes, folio, containing his pieces against Deists, Jews, Romanists, Socinians, and Quakers. He is said to have brought more persons, from other persuasions, into the Church of England, than any man ever did ; his skill in conversation being equal to that in writing. Allowance must be made for a style, which, though sufficiently perspicuous and nervous, is not according to the modern ideas of correctness and elegance. “ Bayle styles him a  
 “ man of great merit and learning. Mr. T. Salmon ob-  
 “ serves, that his works must transmit him to posterity,  
 “ as a man thoroughly learned and truly pious. But a  
 “ better and more disinterested judge, Mr. Harris, in-  
 “ forms us, that he made several converts from Popery ;  
 “ and says, that, notwithstanding his mistaken opinions  
 “ about government, and a few other matters, he deserves  
 “ the highest praise for defending the Christian religion  
 “ against Deists, Jews, and Quakers, and for admirably  
 “ well supporting the doctrines of the Church of England  
 “ against those of Rome.” See *Biographical Dictionary*.—  
 Mr. Leslie’s writings have been neglected, because he had the misfortune to be a Nonjuror. But since the age is disposed to drop prejudices, it is a pity that this alone should be suffered to remain ; especially as the subject of it is now “ waxed old, and ready to vanish away.”

for replies and rejoinders, the sad consequence of which is not only loss of time and temper to the writers, but disgust in the readers, who grow weary, and despairing of being able to fix their opinions, resolve to give themselves no farther trouble about religion. For general utility, perhaps, the didactic form, with the objections duly noticed and obviated in their places, is preferable to the strictly polemical. The latter is often laid aside, with the dispute which occasioned it; but the former, if well executed, may continue to be read and referred to, as a staple and standard book of instruction on the subject of which it treats, from age to age.

The conduct of our opponents of different denominations impresses one lesson upon us with great force. It is this: however our studies may be employed, never to lose sight of the grand object, but to keep it constantly in view, and contrive by all means to forward it. It is marvellous to behold in what manner every department of literature has been occupied, and converted into a battery against the faith and the church. Half our danger does not arise from tracts professedly penned on the subject of religion, but from writings of other kinds, carrying nothing hostile in their appearance. The unsuspecting reader, who sits down to inform or amuse himself with a piece of natural or civil history, biography, a poem, a tale, or a fable, if he have not his wits about him,

him, finds his reverence for the doctrines of Christianity, and those who teach them, filched from him; rises, to his great surprize, half an infidel; and is not sure whether he has a soul, a Saviour, or a God. As it has not yet appeared that the talents of believers are less various, or less excellent, than those of unbelievers, all these methods of diffusing error should be counteracted by the advocates for truth. The taste of the age should be attended to, and instruction administered through such vehicles as are most likely to make it palatable. Every man, in that way to which his genius directs him, should exert his abilities in the service of his Maker and Redeemer. He should early form a plan for this purpose, to be kept in view during the course of his reading, whether stated or occasional. He will be pleased to find, when he does this, how every book he opens will lend its assistance, and furnish some hint that may be improved, for the promotion of his design.\* An observation may be here added, that as in political, so in

\* In this particular, among others, one of our old divines used to say, he found the good effect of a custom he had long practised, which was, on a Sunday evening, to put a fresh sermon on the stocks for the Sunday ensuing. Something always occurred, that was of use, in the reading of the week! during which, he never failed to ask himself, as he went on, To what purpose can I apply this, in the way of my profession?—An excellent rule. See that improving little book, *The Life of Dr. Hammond*, by Bishop Fell.

religious

religious contests, execution is done among the people, not by bulky treatises, but small pamphlets, written down to the apprehensions of the vulgar, diligently circulated, and sold at a low price. \*

My brethren of the clergy will, I am sure, consider, with me, and lay these things to heart. We engage, at ordination, not only “by the Scriptures to teach and exhort with  
“wholesome doctrine,” but likewise to “with-  
“stand and convince gainfayers; to be ready,  
“with all faithful diligence, to banish and  
“drive away all erroneous and strange doc-  
“trines, contrary to God’s word; and both  
“privately and openly to call upon and en-  
“courage others to do the same.” † The faith is a precious deposit committed to our charge. No care, no pains can be too great, to preserve it to our people, and deliver it down to our successors in the ministry, pure and unadulterated. Neither violence nor fraud should be suffered to rob us of the inestimable treasure. God and his church expect and require, that we fulfil honourably this engagement, so solemnly formed in the presence of both. When

\* An excellent little tract was printed for Rivington, in 1774. I wish 20,000 of them were dispersed through the kingdom at this time. It was intituled, *A Preservative against the Publications dispersed by modern Socinians; in which the Impiety and Absurdity of their Principles are clearly shewn. Addressed by a Country Clergyman to his Parishioners.*

† Ordination Office.

ever our faith is assaulted, to us the world naturally looks up for its defence; and it is well, if a failure in this part of our duty be not one day urged against us, as an argument for the abolition of an useless order of men. It is the property of our great adversary, first to TEMPT, and then to ACCUSE.

The propagation and support of true religion constitute, indeed, our peculiar task, the prescribed employment of our time, the proper exercise of our powers and faculties; for want of which, they will be either turned to other pursuits, quite foreign from our profession, or dissipated in frivolous amusements, or permitted to rust in sloth and indolence.\* Study of the Scriptures and Ecclesiastical History must ever be regarded as the first duty of a clergyman, because that alone can prepare and qualify him for a discharge of all the rest. It is a duty which, if cordially taken in hand, and rigorously prosecuted, will soon become his pleasure. And when a man's duty becomes his pleasure, he is a happy man. Till then, he never can be one; being indebted for his peace of mind, if he ever enjoy any, only to the want of consideration and reflection. But what is there which can so enlarge, improve, and delight the human mind, as a contempla-

\* When a friend told Bishop Cumberland, he would wear himself out by his incessant application; "It is better, replied the Bishop, to wear out, than to rust out."

tion of the truths and dispensations of the Almighty? Where is the pleasure that can stand the comparison for a moment? I know of none that is not as much inferior as earth is to heaven.

The Church of England, from the time of the Reformation, has gloried in a learned clergy, who stood prepared to repel, with skill and vigour, the assaults of her various adversaries. Some would persuade us, that this glory is departing from her. "The number of learned Socinians, it is said, is increasing; that of learned Trinitarians, decreasing."\*

The remark cannot but excite some wonder, when coming from one so evidently over-matched, as he appears to have been, in point of learning, by his very respectable antagonist. It affords, however, an useful hint to us, not to grow slack and remiss in our professional studies; not to think of subsisting on the fame acquired by our predecessors, but, diligently availing ourselves of their labours, still farther to advance and set forward the truth by our own. A general diffusion of knowledge in these latter days has enabled the lower orders of mankind to become acquainted with the objections urged against doctrines laid down by our church as essential and fundamental. Her ministers, therefore, will be frequently called upon for answers to those objections; which, without having read and thought well upon the subject, they may be at a loss to furnish. Ad-

\* Importance of Free Enquiry, p. 51.

vantage will be made of this circumstance; their people will be seduced, and the enemy will exult. A very small portion of time, applied regularly and constantly to any one pursuit, will soon effect things almost incredible. It is recorded of the great USHER, that wishing to know, at first hand, the sentiments of antiquity on the points in dispute between the Romanists and ourselves, he went through, between the age of 20 and 38, the voluminous writings of the Fathers, by devoting, amidst his other labours, a small proportion of time every day to that purpose. Tasks of this extent and difficulty need not be now imposed on a clergyman. The evidence on most controverted doctrines has been collected and arranged for him; and by means of a few well-chosen books, \* perused with due attention,

\* Such as—Bishop Bull's *Latin Works*; Waterland's *Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*; his *Sermons at Lady Moyer's Lectures*; Dr. Ridley's, at the same lecture, on the *Holy Spirit*; the writings of Dr. Randolph; Mr. Jones's *Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity*; *Full answer to the Essay on Spirit*; *Letter to the Common People*; *to a Young Gentleman at Oxford*; *Remarks on the Confessional*.

On Socinianism.—Grotius *de Satisfactione*; Stillingfleet's *Discourse on the true Reason of Christ's Sufferings*, against Crellius; Bishop Coneybear's *Sermon on the Satisfaction*; Edwards's *Preservative*; Leslie's *Dialogues on Socinianism*; with Mosheim's *Account of its Rise and Progress*, in his *Ecclesiastical History*.

For the *Judgment of the Jewish Church against the Unitarians*, Dr. Allix's book with that title; a most learned, valuable, and decisive work, on that part of the subject.

he may become a sufficient master of the subject, and of the arguments which have been, or indeed can be, produced; for there is but little fresh matter at this time to be started. What progress might he make, within the compass of a year, at the rate of a couple of hours only in each day?

By such an employment of his hours, he will be prepared, whenever summoned, to render a good account of them. Conscious that he must render an account, and cannot render a good one, it is impossible for him, if he reflect at all, to continue long at ease. The grand question concerning our conduct is, how it will appear at the great scrutiny; and he alone is truly wise, who spends his time as, at the last hour, he will wish to have spent it. Happy the man, who may be able with all humility to say, when that hour shall come—"The time which thou hast given me has been passed in thy service. I have not suffered myself, through indolence or dissipation, to live in ignorance of thy truth, or to withhold it from others. I have laboured diligently and faithfully to find it; and, when found, to publish and defend it. It is not my fault, if the people perish for lack of knowledge. I have done my best: I have fought a good fight: I have kept the faith, and endeavoured that others should do the same." This is a state of satisfaction and comfort for a minister of Christ, weighed against

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which,

which, the world, with all its wealth, all its pleasures, and all its honours, is “dust upon the balance, without weight, and without regard.”

But besides the testimony borne him by his conscience within, other witnesses will appear in his favour from without. He will have the approbation and thanks of all those who will do well to the church and to their country; who do not apprehend that the latter will be benefited by the destruction of the former, or a nation saved by apostacy from its Saviour. He will have the attestation of multitudes, that by his ministry, by his discourses, by his writings they were preserved or reclaimed from error and from death, and conducted in the way of truth and life. “Behold him, and the children which God hath given him, like the arrows in the hand of the mighty: happy the man that hath his quiver full of them; he shall not be ashamed when he speaks with his enemies, at the seat of judgment.”

On that seat he will view the blessed Person for whose faith he has contended; whose cause he has maintained; the honour of whose name he has asserted and vindicated; who has been a spectator of the conflict, and will award the crown.

\*: Isa. viii. 18. Heb. xi. 15. Ps. cxxvii. 4, 5.

*THE TRINITY IN UNITY.*

A

D I S C O U R S E

DELIVERED IN THE

CATHEDRAL AND METROPOLITICAL  
CHURCH OF CHRIST, CANTERBURY,

ON

TRINITY SUNDAY, 1786.

which, the world, with all its wealth, all its pleasures, and all its honours, is “dust upon the balance, without weight, and without regard.”

But besides the testimony borne him by his conscience within, other witnesses will appear in his favour from without. He will have the approbation and thanks of all those who wish well to the church and to their country; who do not apprehend that the latter will be benefited by the destruction of the former, or a nation saved by apostacy from its Saviour. He will have the attestation of multitudes, that by his ministry, by his discourses, by his writings, they were preserved or reclaimed from error and from death, and conducted in the way of truth and life. “Behold him, and the children which God hath given him, like the arrows in the hand of the mighty: happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; he shall not be ashamed when he speaketh with his enemies, at the seat of judgment.”

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## A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

IT was observed, in the preceding discourse, that little new can now be advanced on the subject in hand. The discourse which follows will confirm the observation. It is indeed no more than a very compendious extract from certain parts of three books, which have been for some time before the world, and to which it is intended only as a mark of reference and recommendation, for students in theology. They are, Dr. Waterland's eight sermons, preached at Lady Moyer's lecture, on *the Divinity of our Lord*: Dr. Ridley's incomparable discourses, at the same lecture; on *the Divinity and Operations of the Holy Spirit*: and the Reverend Mr. Jones's *Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity proved by above an hundred Texts, &c.* If in these books the reader do not receive conviction, I much fear it is not in my power to give it him. He must pursue his own way, and permit me to pursue mine. He will do me the justice, however, to believe, I should not reproduce old arguments, did I not find myself able to answer objections, to my own satisfaction. That I can answer them to the satisfaction of Dr. Priestley, I have not the vanity to presume.

presume. He is furnished, I am very sensible, with replies (in his own opinion, and that of his friends, sufficient ones) to any thing that can be written by myself, or by those who are much better qualified to discuss the question. My object, in throwing out this short discourse, is, to bear my testimony to that faith in which I propose to live, and for which, if called upon, I shall, I humbly trust, be prepared to die. Whether Dr. Priestley will order me to rank under the standard of ignorance or insincerity, (two classes into which, it seems, he has divided us,) it is impossible for me to tell. I am conscious to myself of being an honest man. If, after so many years passed in studies of this kind, I am still in ignorance, (and I fear it is of the invincible sort,) I am a very unfortunate one. For his industry and diligence in literary pursuits, no person living can respect and honour Dr. Priestley more than myself. They are qualities which, I hope, we shall endeavour to imitate. To follow him, *passibus æquis*, few indeed are able; perhaps none: and in his philosophical researches, all success attend him! We have only to wish, that, as touching matters theological, his abilities had been employed in a line more, as we apprehend, to the benefit of the Christian world. If the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity be not the doctrine of the Scriptures, and of the primitive church, it matters not how, when, or by whom, it was afterwards

afterwards introduced. It should not have been received; it ought not to be retained. On the other hand, if it really be the doctrine of the Scriptures, and of the primitive church, (as I declare before God, in the sincerity of my soul, upon the best judgment I can form, I am verily persuaded it is)—THEN—all that Dr. Priestley has written, in four large volumes, concerning the Jews, and the Gnostics, and the Ebionites, and the Nazarenes; concerning Plato, and Philo, and Justin Martyr, and Tertullian; concerning philosophers, fathers, and heretics many and diverse, but all unitarians; concerning the supposed *caution* of the apostles, and the metaphysical and injudicious arguments and disquisitions of writers, whether ancient or modern, upon any part of the subject; all this, with the goodly edifice raised on such a foundation, falls directly to pieces, vanishes into air,

And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Leaves not a wreck behind.

Respecting such animadversions as may be made on these discourses, it is not my intention to carry on any altercation, in separate pamphlets. They will be considered in a tract, to be composed, if God shall grant life, health, and sufficient leisure from other necessary employments; on the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity,

vinity, and the different arguments which have been urged against it. Indulgence is requested as to the article of *time*. I cannot write so fast as Dr. Priestley does ; and I wish to execute the work with care and attention : after which, it shall be left to the judgment of the learned, the pious, and the candid, of all denominations.

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M A T T. XXVIII. 19.

GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.

**S**UCH is the solemn form of baptism, prescribed by our blessed Lord himself, as a perpetual standing law to his church. Having redeemed mankind, and thereby acquired a new and special claim to their homage and service, he entered upon and took possession of his purchased inheritance. And for what end? Plainly, that he might bring all nations, thus made his own by right of redemption, to the knowledge and worship of the true God. And how is this done? Why, by making them acquainted, in the very first instance, with the obligations conferred upon them by three ever blessed persons, called by the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These three persons, therefore, thus related and thus named, constitute that one true God, into whose name, faith, and profession, people of all the nations of the earth, and, among them, we who are here assembled, have been baptized. In this consisted the sum of Christianity: on this foundation were the apostles to erect a church throughout all the world.

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world. Here, if any where, a right understanding, upon so important a point as the nature of God, and the manner of his existence, would be highly necessary; nor could any one mistake more dangerously, and fundamentally, than in such an article as this.—Let us then consider, if you please, how much is implied in the form of baptism thus prescribed by our Lord to the universal church, and by that church retained, and observed, from its first foundation to the present hour; how this is confirmed by the declarations of Scripture at large; and the interest we have in the doctrine that shall be thus established.

I. Now, by the being baptized into the name of God, can be meant no less than entering into covenant with a person, as God; professing faith in him, as such; enlisting one's self into his service; and vowing all obedience and submission to him. Such is the natural, the obvious import of this rite, by which we are admitted into the church of Christ, this solemn form of baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; that is, into the faith, service, and worship, of the Holy Trinity.

For let us reflect a little——

The nations were to be baptized in the name of three persons, in the *same manner*, and therefore, surely, in the *same sense*, as in the name  
of

of one. Whatever honour, reverence, or regard, is paid to the Father, in this solemn rite, the same we cannot but suppose paid to all three. Is he acknowledged as the object of worship? So are the other two persons likewise. Is he God and Lord over us? So are they. Are we his subjects, servants, and soldiers, enrolled under him? So are we equally under all. Are we hereby regenerated, and made the temple of the Father? So are we likewise of the Son and Holy Ghost. "WE will come," says our Lord, "and make our abode with him."\* The outward act respects all the three; the inward meaning and signification must do the same.

We may consider likewise, that in the very names of Father and Son, a near relation, alliance, and unity, between two of the persons, is intimated; and in reason, we must infer something of a similar kind for the third; so closely joined with them. It is not said, "in the name of God and his two faithful servants;" nor "of God, and Christ, and the Holy Ghost;" which might have suggested a thought, that one only of the three was God; but, "in the name of the Father and of the Son," a style perfectly equal and familiar, without any note of distinction more than that of a personal relation, carrying with it the idea of a sameness of nature; as, among men,

\* John xiv. 23.

every Father and Son are of the same human nature with each other. From the very wording of the form of baptism, therefore, most reasonably might it be presumed, that the two first persons named were equally divine: and the inference from thence would fairly, and indeed unavoidably, reach to the third, to make all suitable and consistent; besides that the terms Holy, and Spirit, evidently point the same way.

But it is yet farther to be considered by us—and a consideration it is of very great weight indeed upon the subject—that a new religion was to be introduced with this solemn form of words. And among whom was it to be introduced? Among Gentiles, or Heathen nations. These were to be taught to turn from their vanities to the living God; to renounce their idols and false gods, and so to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Now, what must occur to THEM, upon this occasion, but that, instead of all their deities, to whom they had before bowed down, they were in future to serve, worship, and adore, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as the only true and living God? From the pompous and solemn proclamation of these three persons, in opposition to all other gods, what could THEY conclude, but that these Three possessed in reality that Divinity which was falsely presumed with respect to the gods of the nations; that they had a natural right to all that

that homage and service, which men should pay to a Divine Being? We may add, that the circumstance of the form running in the **NAME**—not **NAMES**, but in the singular number, **NAME** of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, might and did in the strongest manner intimate, that the authority of all the **Three** was the same, their power equal, their persons undivided, and their glory one.

The last consideration under this head shall be, that nothing can appear more unreasonable, or unnatural, than to suppose, that God and two **CREATURES** are here joined together in so solemn a rite of admission into a new religion, into the service of the living God, in direct opposition to all **CREATURE-WORSHIP**. For no rational account can be given, why the Son and Holy Ghost should be thus closely and equally joined with the Father, in an act so public, and of so high importance to the salvation of all men, unless it be, that all men are required to believe in, to worship, and to serve **THEM** also, as well as the Father: neither can it be reasonably imagined, that they are recommended to us in any such capacity, as persons to be believed in, served and adored, if they be **CREATURES** only; much less, if Christ be no more than a mere man, like one of us; and the Holy Spirit, a property, or quality only, of the Father:—in short, if the three, taken together, be any other than **THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD**.

Thus

Thus far we have been arguing on the words of the text, and the doctrine implied in them, without taking in what the Scripture has revealed at large concerning the Divinity of the three persons, which was, in the

II<sup>d</sup> Place, proposed to be done.

Concerning the Divinity of the Father, there is no dispute. Respecting that of the Son, you shall judge for yourselves, when I have laid before you what the Scriptures teach relative to his titles, his attributes, and the actions ascribed to him.

The divine titles given to the Son in Holy Scripture are as follow. He is called “the Word that was in the beginning with God, and WAS GOD;” that “was made flesh,” and whose “glory was the glory of the only begotten of the Father.”\* When it is said, “A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,” it is said also, “they shall call his name Immanuel, that is, GOD WITH US.”† He is the LORD, before whose face John the Baptist was sent;‡ the LORD GOD foretold by Isaiah, who was to “feed his flock like a Shepherd.”§ Of Jesus Christ it is affirmed by St. John, “This is THE TRUE GOD, and eternal life.”|| St. Paul mentions “the appearance of the GREAT GOD and our Saviour,” or, “OUR GREAT GOD

\* John i. 14.

† Matt. i. 23.

‡ Luke i. 76.

§ Isai. xl. 10, 11.

|| 1 John v. 20.

“ and Saviour, Jesus Christ,”\* for it is he who shall *appear* to judge the world. Isaiah styles him, “ Wonderful, Counsellor, the MIGHTY GOD ;”† St. Paul again, “ GOD over all, “ blessed for evermore.”‡ In the Old Testament, Christ is frequently called JEHOVAH,§ a name which can belong to no one but God. In the Revelation he is introduced as saying of himself, “ I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, “ which is, and which was, and which is to “ come, the Almighty.”|| By St. Paul he is styled “ The Lord of Glory ;” and by St. John, “ King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” And thus much for his titles.

As to his attributes, he is declared to be eternal, “ without beginning of days, or end “ of life ;” ¶ unchangeable, remaining the same, when the heavens, and the earth, and all that is therein, shall be changed, and pass away ; “ Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-

\* Tit. xi. 13. 1 Pet. i. 7. † Isai. ix. 6. ‡ Rom. ix. 5.

§ Jer. xxiii. 6. Zech. xii. 10, cited John xix. 34. Rev. i. 7. Isai. xl. 10.

|| Rev. i. 11. “ I cannot forbear recording it, (says Dr. Doddridge,) that this text has done more than any other in the Bible, towards preventing me from giving into that scheme, which would make our Lord Jesus Christ no more than a deified creature.” A denial of **CO-EXISTENCE** must have seemed strange doctrine to HIM.

¶ Dr. Kippis, who was his pupil, when he comes to Dr. Doddridge’s life, in the **BIOGRAPHIA**, will tell us, perhaps, what he thought of it.

¶ Heb. vii. 3.

“ day, and for ever ;\* knowing all things, †  
 “ knowing what is in man, ‡ searching the hearts  
 “ and reins :” § present every where, in the  
 midst of his people wherever assembled, || to  
 hear the prayers put up at the same time from  
 the different quarters and ends of the earth ;  
 which cannot be the case of saints or angels.

Of the actions ascribed to Christ, it may  
 suffice to name four only. According to the  
 Scriptures, he created the world by his power ; ¶  
 he governs it by his providence ; how else can  
 he superintend the concerns of his church ? He  
 redeemed it by his mercy ; and he will judge  
 it at the last day. Surely no Being, less than  
 Divine, can be equal to works like these.  
 When he shall appear on his throne, as the  
 Judge of all the Earth, who is the man that  
 will refuse to worship him ? \*\*

The holy Spirit is described in Scripture as  
 the immediate author and worker of miracles ;  
 the inspirer of the prophets and apostles ; the  
 searcher of all hearts, and the comforter of

\* Heb. xiii. 8. † John xvi. 30. xxi. 17. ‡ John xi. 25.  
 § Rev. xi. 23. || Matt. xxviii. 20. ¶ John i. 3. Heb. i. 10.

\*\* I do not see my Saviour only in “ a few detached  
 “ passages” of either Testament. I see him conducting  
 the œconomy of the divine dispensations, through both,  
 from the creation to the consummation of all things, as  
 the יהוה דבר the יהוה מלאך and Ο λογος τς Θεου. Dr. Allix  
 and Mr. Taylor have both demonstrated this point. It is  
 only to be wished, the latter had drawn the conclusion  
 drawn by the former—the just and proper conclusion—  
 that the person spoken of must indeed be VERY GOD.

good Christians in difficulties. To lie to him, is the same thing as to lie to God. Blasphemy against him is unpardonable. To resist him, is the same thing as to resist God. He is in God, and knows the mind of God as perfectly as a man knows his own mind; and that in respect of all things, even the deep things of God. The bodies of men are his temple, and by being his temple, are the temple of God. He is joined with God the Father, not only in the solemn form of baptism, as we have seen above, but in religious oaths, and invocations for grace and peace; in the same authoritative mission and vocation of persons into the ministry, “The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul.”\* Must he not then be a PERSON? In a word, he is LORD, or JEHOVAH, and GOD, and LORD OF HOSTS.†

To these testimonies for the Divinity of the Son and Holy Spirit, I shall add only one observation more, namely, that in a great number of instances, the very same things are said, in different places of Scripture, of all the three divine persons, and the very same actions ascribed to them.‡ The whole Trinity is said to be eternal, holy, true, living, and every where present; to have made man; to in-

\* Acts xiii. 2.

† See the Conclusion of Mr. Jones’s *Catholic Doctrine*, &c. See also Dr. Ridley.

‡ See the Conclusion of Mr. Jones’s *Catholic Doctrine*, &c.

struct and illuminate him; to lead us, to speak to us, and to be with us; to give authority to the church; to sanctify the elect; to perform every divine and spiritual operation; and to raise the dead. Therefore these three were, are, and will be, one God, from everlasting to everlasting.\*

Having now considered the doctrine of the Trinity as implied in the words of the text, and confirmed by the declarations of the Scriptures at large, I am to shew, in the

III<sup>d</sup> and last place, The interest we all have in the doctrine thus established; or, in other words—we have endeavoured to shew what the three divine persons are in themselves, and what relation they bear to each other. Let us now enquire what they are, and what relation they bear, to us, and what are the duties on our side, resulting from that relation; the benefits conferred by them, and the return, in love, honour, and gratitude, due from us.

\* Such being the fact, all disputations concerning the *manner* of the Distinction, the *manner* of the Union, the *manner* of the Generation, and the *manner* of the Procession, is needless, and fruitless:—needless, because if we have divine authority for the fact, it sufficeth; *that* is all we are concerned to know:—fruitless, because it is a disputation without ideas; after a long, tedious, intricate, and perplexed controversy, we find ourselves—just where we were—totally in the dark. Such has been the case respecting this and other questions, God is pleased to reveal the fact; man insists upon apprehending the mode: in his present state he cannot apprehend it; he therefore denies the fact, and commences unbeliever.

Many

Many apprehend the doctrine of the Trinity to be what is called a SPECULATIVE doctrine only, that is to say, a doctrine concerning which men may think, and conjecture, and reason, and dispute, for their amusement, but of no effect or importance in a religious life. This is a considerable mistake in judgment; and to prove that it is so, let us only ask one question:—What is the doctrine of most importance to man, in his religious concerns? Undoubtedly, it is that of his Redemption from sin and sorrow, from death and hell, to righteousness and joy, immortality and glory. But of such redemption what account do the scriptures give us? By whom was the gracious scheme originally concerted, and afterwards carried into execution? Was it not by the three persons of the ever blessed and adorable Trinity?

It was not an after-thought, a new design, formed upon the transgression and fall of our first parents. That event was foreseen, and provision made accordingly: for upon the very best authority we are informed, that Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;"\* that is (for it cannot be otherwise understood) slain in effect, in the divine purpose, and counsel. It is likewise said, that "grace was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." † The words intimate,

\* Rev. xiii. 8. † 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2.

that, previous to the creation of the world, something had passed in our favour above; that the plan of our future redemption was then laid; that some agreement, some covenant, relative to it, had been entered into: “ grace “ was given us,” not in our proper persons, for as yet we were not—we had no being—but in the person of him who was afterward to become our representative, our Saviour—“ in “ Christ Jesus.” Now the plan must have been laid, the covenant entered into, by the parties who have been since graciously pleased to concern themselves in its execution. Who these are, we cannot be ignorant. It was the Son of God who took our nature upon him, and in that nature made a full and sufficient oblation, satisfaction, and atonement, for the sins of the world. It was the Father who accepted such oblation, satisfaction, and atonement, and in consequence forgave those sins. It was the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and the Son, through the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments, by his enlightening, healing, and comforting grace, to apply to the hearts of men, for all the purposes of pardon, sanctification, and salvation, the merits and benefits of that oblation, satisfaction, and atonement.

Say no more, then, that the doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of curiosity and amusement only. Our religion is founded upon it; for what is Christianity, but a manifestation of the  
three

three divine persons, as engaged in the great work of man's Redemption, begun, continued, and to be ended by them, in their several relations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; three Persons, one God? If there be no Son of God, where is our Redemption? If there be no Holy Spirit, where is our Sanctification? Without both, where is our Salvation? And if these two persons be any thing less than divine, why are we baptized, equally, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? Let no man therefore deceive you: "This is the TRUE God, and eternal life." \*

And while you suffer no man to deceive you, do not, I beseech you, deceive yourselves. Benefits conferred require duties to be paid. Remember what the three divine persons have done for you, and forget not what they expect that you should do in return. For how little will it avail you, to believe aright concerning the Trinity, if you live so as to displease the Trinity?—You know and believe in the true God: you do well. But let not that which is an honour to you, be any encouragement to dishonour God; the knowledge of whom can only serve to increase your condemnation, if you live in the practice of pride and malice, envy and hatred, lust and intemperance, even as the heathen who knew him not. And though it be the faith of a Christian which distinguishes him

\* 1 John v. 20.

from the rest of mankind, yet that faith, to profit him, must appear in the conduct of his life; as love to a friend is best witnessed by a readiness to do him service. It is true, the service is not the love, nor of equal value with it; yet the love that refuses the service will be accounted as nothing. The *mystery of faith* is an invaluable treasure, but the vessel that contains it must be clean and undefiled; it must be *holden in a pure conscience*; as the manna, that glorious symbol of the word of faith preached to us by the Gospel, was confined to the tabernacle, and preserved in a vessel of gold. A mind that is conformed to this world, and given up to its pleasures, though it repeat the Creed without questioning a single article of it, will be abhorred in the sight of God, as a vessel unfit for the master's use, and unworthy, because unprepared, to stand in the most holy place. It is the great excellency of faith, that it can produce such a transformation in the life and manners, as no other principle has any power to do. But many are possessed of this truth, without applying it to their own advantage. Let them, however, bear in mind, that, "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord:" none of the world's dross or impurity will be suffered to continue in his sight. And in this he is no hard master, reaping where he has not sown, and requiring the fruit of good works without giving us strength and ability to bring them forth. He has provided for us the pre-

cious blood of the Lamb, and offered to us the assistance of his Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled to serve that true and living God in whom we believe. If we are purged by HIM, we shall be clean: if HE washes us, we shall be whiter than snow; and when the kingdom of God shall come, and his glory shall appear, we shall be prepared to behold his face in righteousness.\*

The sum of the whole matter, as St. Paul has wonderfully expressed it in a single verse, is this — “Through Christ we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father. † To the Father, with a due sense of this great honour and privilege, as sons of God, let us therefore address ourselves, for pardon, and admission to our heavenly inheritance; “O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us miserable sinners!” But as we have no deserts of our own, no works of righteousness by which to claim his favour, and are entitled only through the sufferings and satisfaction of Christ, let us beseech HIM to intercede for us, and plead his merits with the Father; “O God the Son,

\* It has been asked, “Of what importance the doctrine of the Trinity can be to the State?” We answer, much, every way; as it is a doctrine of the Scriptures, and as it is a doctrine pregnant with the noblest motives to Christian love and obedience. It therefore requires and demands the support of every state, wishing to enjoy the favour and protection of that God, who, for such gracious purposes, hath revealed it.

† Ephes. ii. 18.

“ Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us  
 “ miserable sinners !” And since the benefits  
 of his merits are applied, and our pardon sealed,  
 and ourselves enabled to render an acceptable  
 service, only by the operations and assistances  
 of the Holy Spirit, let us implore HIS aid also,  
 “ O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from  
 “ the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us  
 “ miserable sinners !” Yet remembering, that  
 how various soever the œconomy may be, sal-  
 vation is the one sole undivided end and work  
 of all ; therefore to ALL let us address our  
 earnest prayers and invocations, as to the Great  
 Power to whom we have consecrated ourselves  
 and services ; “ O holy, blessed, and glorious  
 “ Trinity, three Persons, and one God, have  
 “ mercy upon us miserable sinners !”

And thou, almighty and everlasting God,  
 who hast given unto us, thy servants, grace by  
 the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge  
 the glory of the eternal Trinity, and, in the  
 power of the divine Majesty, to worship the  
 Unity ; we beseech thee, that thou wouldst  
 keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore de-  
 fend us from all adversities ; who livest and  
 reignest one God world without end.

To this one God, for the means of grace  
 vouchsafed to us in this life, and for the hopes  
 of glory in another, be ascribed, as is most due,  
 all honour, majesty, and dominion, all praise  
 and adoration, both now and for ever.



T H E E N D.