

Excerpts from
The Bible Doctrine of God,
Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit,
Atonement, Faith and Election.

By William Kinkade.

1829

Underground Publications,
Michigan, New York, Oklahoma, USA.

A common man's reasoning as to what is in the
Bible and what is not as it relates to
Godhead and Trinity.

PREFACE.

TO THE READER,

The reader may wish to know how I got in possession of my present views of religion. I was born in what was then called the back-woods, in western Pennsylvania. My parents moved to Kentucky, when I was not more than three, or four years old. I received my first ideas of religion, from my mother, and I have no doubt but that her prayers and instructions, were the principle means which made me a Christian.

She told me there was a God and a devil, a heaven and a hell, and I believed her. She taught me the difference between righteousness and sin, told me that a virtuous life would secure the favor of God, and that a vicious course would not fail to draw on me his fiercest displeasure. She learnt me the Mother's Catechism, and taught me that unless I would pray to God, I could not be righteous in his sight. A belief of these things made me religious, and when I was not more than six years old, I frequently went into the woods, or some other secret place, and kneeled by myself in prayer to God, when at the same time I did not know that any other person ever did so, for although my mother had taught me to say my prayers, when I went to bed at night, and when I got up in the morning, she had never told me to go into secret, and pray by myself. I was raised in the Presbyterian Church, and still think they are the best religious sect I know, except the Quakers; and in some respects, they excel them. I learned the Presbyterian Catechisms, but never believed near all of them.

The Bible was my school-book, and I still think it is the best school-book in the world. In learning my lessons in the New Testament, I took up the idea that God was the

greatest, and oldest person in existence, and that Jesus Christ was the next greatest; but I was just as far from thinking that he was as old, or as great as his Father, as I was from thinking that I was as old, or as great as my father.

I was under conviction for sin, almost all my life, and spent my days in sinning and repenting, till the great revival took place in the Presbyterian Church in 1800, and 1801, when I was brought under still deeper conviction for my sins, and my trouble of mind increased till the 26th, day of September 1802, and then at a large camp-meeting, God converted my soul; he removed the burden of guilt from my mind, shed abroad his love in my heart, and filled me with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

I then refused to call myself by any name but that of *Christian*, bore a public testimony against all *party* names, and declared that I would take no other book for my standard but the *Bible*. I did not then know that any other person would unite with me to have no name but *Christian*, and take no standard but the *Bible*, but I thought it was right, and therefore determined to pursue it, let the consequence be what it might. I could have been a Baptist, a Methodist, or a Presbyterian preacher. The two latter sects both strongly solicited me to be a preacher among them, but I utterly refused, because I thought it would be better for me to go alone on the word of God, than to put myself under obligation to believe, and preach any system that could be framed by fallible men. About that time the Presbytery where I lived, licensed near thirty preachers, that had not a liberal education, but this has since caused a division among them, and given rise to a new sect, who call themselves *Cumberland Presbyterians*.

I have since ascertained that in different parts of America, there were hundreds who started about the same time that I did, and although they were generally unknown to each other, they took the same ground, and were actuated by

the same Spirit. According to the best of my recollection it was about three years after I took this stand before I heard of Marshall, Thompson, Stone, or any other member of the Springfield Presbytery.

I was raised on the frontiers of Kentucky, in the midst of the Indian war, where men were only respected in proportion to their valor and skill in fighting Indians, and killing wild beasts; and I verily thought that to be a brave skilful warrior: and a good hunter was the greatest honor to which any man could attain.

When I got religion I had but little learning, I could barely read and write, and that but very indifferently. I then thought, and yet think, that God then called me by his Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel.

On this occasion I had to make a great sacrifice. I laid aside my leather hunting-shirt, my rifle-gun, and butcher-knife, and left my father's house and my beloved woods to travel and preach the Gospel. But before I started to preach, I thought it was necessary to buy a bible, and as I had no money, I agreed to work to a Presbyterian man for one. He let me have it for five days work, and although I had to grub bushes in a brier patch, I think it was the best bargain I ever made; I have it yet. It is a little pocket bible without note, comment, or marginal reference. By reading it, I formed my present views of religion, which I committed to writing in all their essential points, without the assistance of commentators, and before I had seen a concordance, nor had I at that time ever read a word from the pen of a Unitarian. After I had preached a while I went to school to Doctor Stubs, who taught an academy in the neighborhood of Newport, Kentucky: there I got some more learning. Boarding and schooling were both very high, and I paid my way by working day's works.

Although I have been a scholar in several schools, have travelled and preached more than twenty years, read

several books, conversed with many men famed for wisdom, had many private and public disputes on various doctrines of religion; still all I have learned has only confirmed me in the great and leading truths of religion, which I first learned by reading the little bible that I earned by grubbing in a brier patch. I now feel thankful to God that the independence of mind which grew up with me in my native woods has never forsaken me. I have at all times dared to oppose any thing that I did not think was right. Although this course has always created me enemies, and rendered me unpopular, still I glory in it, because I think it is the course pursued by the ancient prophets, and by Christ and his apostles.

I disown all party names. I do not profess to belong to any sect of Christians. I fellowship all good people of every name without regard to how much they may differ from me in doctrines. I have written this book as the sentiments of no sect, nor denomination of people. It is a sketch of my own views. If you are a Christian, or a sincere seeker of religion, I remain your brother, in the patience, tribulation, and hope of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

WILLIAM KINKADE,
A Stranger, and Pilgrim on Earth.

May God guide us into all necessary truth.
New-York, *July* 1, 1829.

PART III.

THOUGHTS ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE UNITY OF GOD.

I shall first attempt to prove that there is but one self-existing independent God. "Thou shalt have no other God before me." Ex. xx. 3. "Unto thee it was showed that thou mightiest know, that the Lord he is God; there is none else besides him." Deut. iv. 36—39. "Know therefore, this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else." "Thou art God alone." Psal. lxxxvi. 10. "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of hosts, I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and besides me there is no God." Isa. xlv. 6. "I am the Lord, and there is none else." Chap. xlv. 6—22. Some people argue that, because this God is called the Redeemer of Israel, he is therefore Christ, and hence infer that Christ is all the God in the universe. But this conclusion is certainly unwarranted, because the title of Redeemer must be as applicable to the Father, as it is to the Son. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" Mai. ii. 10. "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." Deut. vi. 4. He did not say the Lords, our Gods, are three Lords. In the New Testament, Christ repeats this text in the same words, but if he knew that God existed in a Trinity of persons, and that it is essential to our salvation for us to believe so, he certainly would not have deceived us, but would have told us plainly that God exists in three persons. "God is one." Gal. iii. 20. "Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well."

Jam. ii. 19. One of the scribes asked the Saviour, “which is the first commandment of all?” and Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is, hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord.” “And the scribe said unto him, well Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God; and there is none other but he.” Mark xii. 29—32. There can be no doubt but that Christ and the scribe, in this passage, both intended to assert that God is personally, numerically, and essentially but one being.

I will now show from scripture that this one God is the Father. “There is one body; and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Eph. iv. 4—6. Here the apostle asserts that this *one God and Father of all* is above all. Now it is plain that if the *one Spirit*, and the *one Lord*, that are mentioned in the same passage, are both God in the same sense that the Father is, and are in all respects as great as he is, the apostle has told two falsehoods: *first*, he has said that there is but one God and Father of all, when at the same time he knew that the *one Spirit*, and the *one Lord*, were just as much God, as the Father is. And in the *second* place, he has affirmed that this *one God and Father* is above all, when at the same time, he knew as well as he knew he had a head, that the *one spirit*, and *one Lord*, that he had just mentioned in contradistinction from the Father, and from each other, were both coequal, coessential, and coeternal with the Father. If a preacher in a Trinitarian church in the present day should affirm that neither the Lord, nor the Spirit is God, and that there is no God but the Father, and that he is above all the beings in the universe, they would charge him with heresy: and no doubt if the Ephesians had been strong Trinitarians, they would have had Paul up about it. Well for old Paul, that the doctrine of the Trinity was not known in the church at that day, or perhaps he would have shared the fate of Michael

Survetus, whom John Calvin caused to be burnt alive for believing that the Father was greater than the Son.

Paul says, "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be, that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be Gods many, and Lords many.) 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." I Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6. Here Paul declares that there is but one *God*, and that this *one God* is the Father; and by mentioning him in contradistinction from the Lord Jesus Christ, he most unequivocally denies that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one God of the Christians.— If I should say there are a great many people in the state, but in this house there is but *one man*, and one little boy, it would be clearly denying that the boy is a man. From this passage it appears that all things are of, that is, they all originated from God, and were made and consist by Christ; which proves God to be the prime, and Christ the instrumental cause of creation, redemption, and providence.

If in writing a letter to your friend in England, relative to our government, you would say, "There is but one President in this country, for though there be that are called Presidents, whether in church or in state, (as there are in an inferior sense, Presidents many, and Secretaries many,) but to us, the American people, there is but one President, viz. John Quincy Adams, from whom all executive power originates, and one Secretary of State, viz. Henry Clay, by whom the whole department of State is regulated;" by such writing you would not only deny that the Secretary is the chief ruler, but you would plainly affirm that his power is derived from the President; and certainly no person of common sense could gather from such statements, that this government has a triumvirate of three persons in the Presidency. How could Paul, consistently with truth, declare that the Father is the *one*

God of whom are all things, and that too in contradistinction from the *one Lord Jesus Christ*, if, at the same time, he knew the son was as great a God as the father, and had as much original power as he had?

In teaching Timothy the knowledge of God, Paul says, “For *there is* one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” I Tim. ii. 5. Here the writer draws as clear a distinction between the *one God* and the *one Mediator*, as he does between the one God and men. If I should say *there is one* British King, and one mediator between the British King and the United States, viz. the Emperor of Russia, would not the distinction be as clearly marked between the King and the Emperor as it would be between the King and the U. States? Then who could be condemned as a fool and as an enemy to his country, for taking up the idea from such an expression, that the British King and the Russian Emperor are two distinct persons? So I think no person should be treated as a fool, or as a heretic, for believing that God and the Mediator are two distinct beings.

If I should say there was one man very angry with me, and that there was one mediator stepped in between him and me, viz. a woman, the distinction would not be more clearly marked between the man and the woman, than Paul has marked it in this text between the *one God* and the *one Mediator*; nor would this form of speech more clearly show that the woman was not a man than the above text proves, that the man, Christ Jesus, is not the supreme God. But if I knew that this Mediator, who stepped in between me and the angry man, was also as really and properly a man as he was, and yet, at the same time, should report that he was a woman, I should be guilty of falsehood: and if Paul knew that the Mediator was as really and properly God, as the father was; and yet, at the same time, asserted that he was the man Christ Jesus, in contradistinction from the *one God*, he has used language adapted to deceive all his readers.

If the blessed Jesus is the supreme God, he cannot be the Mediator between God and men, because a mediator is not a mediator of one, but must be a third person interposing between two contending parties. An offended God, and offending sinners are these two parties, and if Christ is the supreme God, then he is one of the parties, and therefore cannot be a third person to mediate between himself and the other.

Once, a long time ago, a Trinitarian reproached me for denying the divinity of Christ, and I asked him if he believed Jesus Christ was the self-existent supreme God, and he answered yes. I then asked him if he believed there was any mediator between Jesus Christ and sinners, and he said no; then said I, you do not believe there is any Mediator between the self-existent supreme God and sinners. I then saw clearly, that Trinitarianism takes the Mediator to make a God of, and as I did not feel willing to risk the chance of getting to heaven without a Mediator, I concluded that our heavenly Father would do for my God, and I would cling to Jesus Christ as a mediator between him and me, and trust in God to save me through the blessed Jesus, according to the plan laid down in the Gospel. I know many good people teach that Christ's human nature is the Mediator between his divinity and men; but as they have never proved, nor never can prove, that he is both a finite and an infinite being, that he has an infinite nature, which stands opposed and needs to be reconciled to the salvation of men, and also a finite or human nature, which is disposed to favor them, I see no authority to trust in such a mediation; besides if all my hopes of salvation were bottomed on the exertions of a mere human being, who has to plead my cause against an infinite unchangeable God, that feels disposed to damn me, I should think my chance is but slim. But when I consider that the Mediator is ten thousand times greater than all the men on earth and all the angels in heaven, and the next greatest being in the universe to God the Father;

and when I regard God as a being, altogether as forgiving and compassionate as Christ is, and reflect that all the Mediator has to do in order to save my soul, is to cleanse me from sin, and reconcile me to God; and when the scripture informs me, that all power in heaven and in earth is given to him, and that he is able save to the uttermost all who will come to God by him, I can feel no hesitation in trusting my soul to his care. And if there is any farther encouragement necessary to enable us to trust in Christ, it is furnished by those passages of scripture which inform us that he has conquered death, and that God has committed all judgment to him, and engaged to make good to the Christians every promise which he has made in the Gospel.

The difference between us and the Trinitarians on the subject of redemption, appears to me to be this: we hold that the Father is engaged to reconcile sinners to himself, through the instrumentality of his Son, who is the next greatest being in the universe to God; while they teach that his human nature, which they say is a mere man, is engaged to reconcile an unchangeable God to sinners. And which of these views gives the greater encouragement to sinners the reader will judge.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY EXAMINED.

Many good people believe that in God there is a trinity of three coequal, coessential, and coeternal persons, whom they call God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. They also affirm, that the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, and that the Holy Ghost is eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. These doctrines are plainly stated in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, and may also be found in several standard books that have been adopted as systems of faith by the different religious sects.

If these phrases were in the Bible, I would not say a word against them; but as neither the word *trinity*, *coequal*, *coessential*, nor *coeternal*, nor the phrase, *three persons in the Godhead*, nor *eternally begotten*, nor *eternally proceeding*, nor *eternal son of God*, is in the holy scriptures, but are all mere human inventions; no person who takes the Bible for a standard will consider me erroneous for rejecting them, and making them subjects of animadversion. The idea of a person and the idea of a being are inseparable, they are both one idea. We cannot possibly conceive of a person without having the idea of a being formed in our minds. The moment we conceive of three persons, who are equally God, that moment we conceive of three beings, who are equally God. If any Trinitarian should dispute this, let him ask himself whether he believes either of the three persons is a real being or not, and his own conscience will convince him that I am correct. If I should state that there are three equal persons in the room, and that each of them is really and properly a man, it would be most clearly affirming that there are three men in the room; and if I say there are three coeternal persons, each of whom is really and properly God, it is as plain a declaration

that there are three co-eternal Gods, as can be made in human language.

Each of these persons must be a being, or a nonentity. If you believe they are three beings, and each one eternally God, then you believe there are three eternal Gods: but if you deny that either of them is a real being, then you deny that there are three persons in the Godhead, because you have asserted that neither of those persons is a real being. If God exists in three persons, and neither of these three persons is a real being, then God is not a real being, because three nonentities cannot make a being.

Trinitarianism runs me into a dilemma between Tritheism and Atheism. If there are three persons, each of whom is a real being, and really and properly God, then there must be three Gods; but if neither of them is a being who is really God, then there is no being that is really a God, because if neither Father, Son, nor Holy Ghost, is a real being, and properly a God, there can be no God in the universe.

Equality implies plurality; a lone being must be compared with some other being before it can be said of him that he is equal, therefore if the word equal is applicable to the persons in the trinity, they must be a plurality of beings, equal with each other by comparison. But if there be three persons or beings, that are equally and eternally God, then there can be no supreme being, because no being can be supreme, who is in company with two others, that are in every respect equal to himself.

If these three persons are not three beings, but all compose only one being, then God must exist in three component parts. This runs into Atheism, because if each of the three persons is but the third part of a God, there is not a whole God among them, because three finite parts cannot make one infinite whole.

There is no truth more clearly taught in the Bible, than that Christ is the Son of God. If God from all eternity existed

in three persons, then Christ must be the Son of three persons; if so, he must be the fourth person in the Godhead. If Christ is the eternal Son of God, and was eternally begotten of three persons, then he must have been one of the three persons that eternally begot himself. But if he was begotten by his Father alone, then he could not be as old as his Father, nor an eternal Son. If Jesus Christ and his Father are one and the same being, that is, if he is the self-existent God and Father of all, and yet was eternally begotten, then the self-existent Father and God over all, was eternally begotten, and is an eternal Son. If to escape the absurdity of believing that the Father was eternally begotten, we should conclude that he and the Son are two distinct beings, then we must either suppose that they are both self-existent, and so believe in two self-existent Gods; or else we must fall in with the scriptural doctrine that Jesus Christ derived his existence from God.

If Christ is the self-existent God and at the same time the Son of the same God, then he must be the Son of himself. If he is the self-existent God, and if that very self-existent God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, then he is the Father of himself. And if he is the Father of that being whose Son he is, then he must be his own Grandfather.

To say that Christ is self-existent, is the same as to say he is not the Son of God, because that being, who derived existence from no one, but independently existed of himself from all eternity, cannot be a Son, cannot have a Father; because the terms *Father* and *Son* are inseparable from the ideas of predecessor and successor, and elder and younger. If the phrase *Son of God* does not prove that he derived his existence from God, it does not prove that he is any how related to him.

Many people in the present day deny a trinity of persons, but contend for a trinity of offices in God. They say, that as one man may at the same time be a judge of the court, a justice of the peace, and a captain of the militia, so by the

titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, God reveals himself to us in the three offices of Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. If these men mean what they say, they do not believe that Christ is a person, or a rational being, but that he is nothing but an office.—They may truly speak of Judge Good, Esquire Good, and Captain Good, and still mean the same person, but they cannot in truth, apply such language to him as the holy scriptures do to Christ and his Father.—They cannot say, in truth, that Captain Good stands at Esquire Good's right hand, nor that Esquire Good proceeded and came forth from Captain Good, and that he did not come to do his own will, but the will of the Captain who sent him.

It is not a little strange that in many of the Trinitarian Churches a majority of the members are of this faith; and although they flatly deny that there is more than one person in the Godhead, yet they are considered orthodox; and notwithstanding they are downright Unitarians themselves, they cordially unite with the Trinitarians to persecute every man who acknowledges himself a Unitarian, or that believes Christ derived his existence from the Father.

Although the doctrine of three persons in the trinity is a leading article in the creeds of all the Trinitarian Churches, yet but few of their members will acknowledge that there are three coequal, coeternal persons, each one of whom is really and properly God. Notwithstanding the most of them acknowledge the trinity in some form or other, they differ widely among themselves on the subject. The *first class* teach that there are three persons in the Godhead. A *second class* believe that God has a trinity of offices, as above stated. There is a *third sort* of Trinitarians, who contend for three modes of existence; they say that, as rain, snow, and ice, are not three elements, but are only three modes, in which the one element of water exists, so Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not three persons, each one of whom is a real God, but only three modes, in which the one God exists. A *fourth class*

believe in a trinity of attributes; they argue, that as light, color, and heat are three distinct properties of the one natural sun, so Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are nothing more than three attributes, or perfections of the one God. There is a *fifth sort* of Trinitarians, who deny that there are in the true sense of the words, three persons in God, and yet contend for three distinctions in Deity; but what they mean by these three distinctions I have never been able to learn. A *sixth description* of Trinitarians with whom I have been acquainted, openly deny that there are three coeternal self-existent persons, each of whom is God, in the highest sense of the word; but they contend for a trinity of faculties in the Almighty. They say, that as soul, body, and spirit make but one man, and as will, memory, and understanding form but one mind, so Father, Son, and Holy Ghost compose but one God. I have known a *seventh class* who say that all they mean by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is three operations of the Divine Being. The *eighth division* in the Trinitarian phalanx declare that by three persons, they only mean three relations in Deity. And those people who argue, that all we should understand by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is three manifestations of God to his creatures, bring up the *ninth division* of this great Trinitarian army.

Notwithstanding right divisions out of nine in this mighty host, deny that there is more than one person, who is God in the highest sense, yet for professing to believe in a trinity, they are all allowed to be orthodox.

It is not common for logicians to dispute much about words, when they agree in the idea; but as it is impossible to form any distinct idea of how God can be but one undivided rational being, and yet, at the same time, be three distinct rational persons, the abettors of the system appear to have concluded that ideas have nothing to do with it, and have therefore mutually agreed not to trouble themselves about the idea, but just contend for the word, and extend the hand of

fellowship to all who ascribe a trinity to God; whether they mean a trinity of persons, offices, attributes, modifications, relations, manifestations, faculties, operations, distinctions, or what not. If all this is orthodox trinitarianism, it appears to me that no believer in a God can be unsound in the faith of the trinity; because we all believe God is a Creator, a Lawgiver, and a Judge, or that he has at least three attributes, or that we have three manifestations of God in the works of creation, providence, and redemption.

But some of us cannot conscientiously call Jesus Christ a mere attribute, nor a mere operation, nor can we believe that the unchangeable God has gone through three modifications as water does, when it is alternately changed into rain, snow, and ice.

If these people who oppose the doctrine of three persons in the trinity, believe as they say, they are all strictly Unitarians; that is, they believe there is but one person who is a self-existent God. I am truly glad that the march of intellect in the present day is so great, that the anti-scriptural, unreasonable doctrine of three coeternal persons in the Godhead, is becoming almost universally unpopular.

It is not probable that Christians will long contend that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are nothing but three attributes, modes of existence or the like, because they must soon see that if any one of these systems be true, a great part of the scriptures must be nonsense. If the person of God consists of three attributes, or three modes of existence, and Christ and the Holy Spirit compose two thirds of them, then Christ must be a mere attribute, or a mode of existence, and the Son of three attributes, or of three modes of existence, and at the same time, one of those very attributes, or modes, whose Son he is. The same may be said of the Holy Spirit. If this doctrine be true, it is nothing but an attribute, or a mode of existence, and proceeds from three attributes or from three modes of existence, and is, at the same time, one of those

very attributes, or modes of existence, from which it proceeds.

Every reflecting man must see that these trinities of attributes, manifestations, &c. cannot bear the relations to each other, nor sustain the offices, that the scriptures ascribe to the Father and the Son. It is not true that one manifestation, or one mode of existence is the only begotten son of another. Nor would it accord with truth or good sense, to say that one attribute stands at another attribute's right hand. Christ says that he proceeded and came forth from God, and that he did not come to do his own will, but the will of his Father, that sent him: but the idea of one mode of existence, or so forth, proceeding and coming forth from another, and not coming to do its own will, but the will of the other that sent it, is too absurd to need refutation.

It would not be scriptural to say that a *relation*, a *manifestation*, or a *distinction*, created the world, is the Judge of the world, or the Mediator between God and men; but to say these things of the Father and the Son, is to speak the very language of the Bible.

These various speculations on the trinity, prove that the religious sects who profess to believe in that doctrine, are far from being satisfied on the subject. I doubt whether any rational man ever believed the doctrine, because faith is a relying on evidence, and evidence implies understanding; that which we do not understand can be no evidence to us. And we certainly cannot understand how a son can be as old as his father, nor how three persons can be but one being.

When evidence is brought both for, and against a doctrine, we are apt to believe that which appears to us the stronger. In support of the trinity we have the opinions of men accompanied with their comments on certain passages of scripture, from which they think the doctrine may be fairly inferred, but there is not one text in the Bible which states the doctrine unequivocally, or in language that can mean nothing

else. Nor is there any thing in nature, which teaches us that three rational persons are but one being, or that a son is as old as his father, but on the contrary, all we hear, feel, or see, teach the reverse.

To say that lead is not heavy, or that ice is not cold, is not more false than to say that a son is as old as his father. To say that five hundred persons are but one being, is just as true, as to say that three persons are but one being. No evidence can establish a self-evident falsehood, nor overthrow a self-evident truth. If I should say *that heavy lead is not heavy*, the assertion would go as pointedly to prove that it is heavy, as that it is not, because by such a contradictory expression I should assert the one as much as the other. So if we should find it stated in scripture words, that Jesus Christ is the eternally begotten Son of God, such a statement would just furnish as strong evidence that he derived his existence from God, and is younger than his Father, as that he existed from all eternity, because the word Son, when used to distinguish him from his Father, and the word *begotten*, when applied to him as a son, as clearly indicate that he is younger than his Father, and derived his existence from him, as the word eternally implies that he existed from all eternity. But happily for the credit of the Bible, these contradictory expressions are corruptions of Christianity, and cannot be found in the holy scriptures.

It is very doubtful whether those who framed the doctrine of the trinity, did themselves believe that Jesus Christ was as old, and in all respects as great, as his Father. It is true that they have plainly said so, but it is also true that they have at the same time, as plainly ascribed to the Father, greater age, dignity, and power, than they have to the Son. They have called him the first person in the trinity. They have said he is Christ's Father, and that the Father sent the Son. They no doubt thought that to say the Son is the first person in the trinity, or that he begat the Father, or sent the Father,

would be diminishing the real dignity of the Father; but if they believed that they could apply such language to the Son without detracting from his character, they must have regarded him as a less dignified person than his Father. If we are to understand them according to the true and common import of the terms they use, we must suppose they believed that God was older than Christ, because they call him Christ's Father, and that he was greater than Christ, because they say he sent Christ: and that the Son derived his existence from God, because they say that God begat him. But if their words are not to be understood according to their common and true import, then we do not know what they believed. It is true they have said that there are three coeternal, coequal persons in the Godhead, but if they are not to be understood literally, they may by such expressions mean that there are ten, or but two, persons in the Godhead. If by the word *persons*, they do not mean rational beings, they may mean trees. If by the word *three*, they do not mean three, perhaps they mean five hundred. If by the word *coequal*, they do not mean equal, they may mean unequal. If by the word *Godhead*, they do not mean a self-existent God, they may mean the world, and finally, when they say there are three coequal persons in the Godhead, they may only mean that there are five hundred unequal trees in the world, or they may mean something else: but if they mean what they say, they believe that there are three self-existent eternal Gods.

If the three persons in the Godhead are in all respects equal to each other, they must all three be finite, because when one being is equal with another in size, age, understanding, or in any other respect, it is by measurement or computation; and that which is infinite cannot be equalled, because it cannot be measured, nor computed. If God consists of three finite persons, he must himself be finite, because three finite persons cannot make one infinite being. By investing a son with authority, a father may make him equal

to himself in transacting business, but cannot make him equal to himself in age; so by the authority that God conferred on Christ, he was made equal to him in the work that he gave him to do, just as an agent is equal to his employer in executing the business he is empowered to transact; but that does not prove that he was equal to God in every respect.

If God exists in three persons, and Jesus Christ is the Son of God, it is altogether as proper to call him the Son of the Holy Ghost, or the Son of himself, as it is to call him the Son of the Father.

The arguments that are advanced in the present day against the trinity, will appear to future generations as the arguments of the prophets against the heathen Gods do to us now; that is, efforts to disprove self-evident falsehoods. It appears to us strange, that the people in that day should have been so ignorant as to need whole chapters of argumentation to prove to them that wood, or metal, made into the shape of a man, was not a proper object of worship; or that such an image could not deliver them from their enemies, fill their houses with riches, nor save their lives.

So it will appear strange to future generations, that professors of Christianity in the nineteenth century, should need long arguments to convince them that three distinct persons are not one being, or that a son is not as old as his father, or what is still more absurd, that a son is not his own father.

I have long thought that as far as Christians have distinct ideas on the Godhead, their faith is nearly the same; and that our principal difference is on certain unscriptural propositions, which present no distinct ideas to our minds. For instance, when we say, "*There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,*" the proposition conveys distinct ideas to our minds, and we all agree that it is literally true. But when it is affirmed that *three coeternal persons are but one God*, the former clause of the

proposition presents to our minds the idea of three coeternal beings, but the latter clause contradicts it, and asserts that they are but one being. Thus the two ideas being blended in our minds, neither of them is distinct from the other, and hence become a subject of disputation. They are like the figure 3, written right on the figure 1, thus, (B). It becomes a subject of disputation, one calls it three, another calls it one, a third says it is the letter B, and the fourth argues that it is nothing but a blot. But if they had been written distinct and legible, there would have been no dispute about them.

We all agree that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, because the proposition is clearly taught in the scriptures, and conveys distinct ideas to our minds. But when it is stated that he is the *eternal Son of God*, the ideas are no longer distinct: the word *eternal* holds him up as self-existent, but the word *Son* clearly indicates that his existence is derived; so the two ideas being blended in our minds, we are thrown into confusion, and begin to dispute on the subject. These unscriptural, contradictory propositions among Christians, like an uncertain sound of a trumpet in the field of battle, throw the whole ranks into confusion. That ministers of religion should divide the church of God, and induce one part of it to persecute the other, merely to keep in credit these inconsistent propositions, which they themselves acknowledge are not in the Bible, appears very astonishing to, and is the cause of great grief among the lovers of truth and virtue.

I will now propose a plan of reconciliation between the disputers on this subject. The plan is this:—Let us believe every word relative to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which we find clearly stated in the scriptures; and never contend for, nor dispute about any word, sentence, or form of speech, relative to either of them, but what we find, word for word, in the Bible. It seems to me that those who prefer the word of God to all human writings, and wish to follow after peace

with all men, can have no objection to this plan; yet I know that bigoted Trinitarians will not agree to it, because that moment they consent to it they give up the doctrine of the trinity; for they know that not one of the leading phrases, which they use to express that system, is in the Bible. It would be well for *every* member of the Christian Church to propose this plan to his Trinitarian neighbor; if it be acceded to, there will be an end to the disagreeable controversy; but if the Trinitarian should reject it, he, by so doing, will fairly acknowledge that his doctrine of trinity is not the language of the Bible.

Although the pious Trinitarians admit in theory, that Jesus Christ is the supreme and only God, yet they deny it in practice, because when they attempt to worship God, they describe him in their prayers as the supreme Judge, and Jesus as a Mediator between him and men, praying to his Father for sinners. I shall conclude this chapter with a short address to Trinitarians.

Dear Brethren:—If by the phrase, *three persons in the Godhead*, you do not mean three beings, three offices, three attributes, three modes of existence, nor any other three such things, what do you mean? If you can give no definition of the terms by which you express your faith, you do not know what you express when you use those terms. If the doctrine of the trinity is an inexplicable mystery that you cannot possibly understand, and if you cannot explain the terms by which you attempt to express it, then you neither know what you speak, nor whereof you affirm. Now in the name of common sense, I ask why do you make those expressions, which you acknowledge are unintelligible to yourselves, essential articles of religion, when, at the same time, you know they are not in the Bible? And in the name of Christian charity, I ask why do you reject from your fellowship pious Christians, whose morals are irreproachable, and stigmatize them as infidels and enemies of the cross, merely because their minds

are not capable of receiving a doctrine, that you say is incomprehensible to your own minds, or because they refuse to express their faith in certain unscriptural terms, the meaning of which you confess you do not understand yourselves? And in the presence of Jesus Christ, before whose judgment seat we must all stand, I ask when did he authorize any set of men to go into all the world, and teach all nations that if they did not believe in a trinity of three self-existent coequal, coessential, coeternal persons, each one of whom is God in the highest sense of the word, that they should all be damned?

Now, brethren, as I propose these questions in love, I hope you will attend to them with candor, and investigate the subject with that diligence and honesty, which become rational beings inquiring into the things that belong to their eternal state. As error never can profit us, we should in all our religious inquiries make truth our aim, and the Bible our guide.—May God, by his holy spirit, guide us into all truth.

CHAPTER III.

THE EVIDENCES THAT HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO PROVE THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY EXAMINED.

The following passage has frequently been brought to prove the doctrine of trinity. "Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Luke iii 21, 22. They suppose that, because the Father spoke from heaven, and the Spirit descended on Christ in the likeness of a dove, that therefore there must be a trinity of three coequal, coessential, coeternal persons in the Godhead. But I think this a most unwarrantable conclusion, because the text says nothing about equality, nor eternity: for all it teaches to the contrary, Christ may be no greater than Moses, and the Holy Ghost, if it is a person may be as much inferior to the Father as a dove is to a man.

This text proves that the Father and the Son are two distinct persons, that Christ is the Son of God, that he was baptized, that God sent the Holy Spirit upon him, and was well pleased with him, but it by no means proves any thing relative to his equality with the Father. If this passage is urged to prove that the Holy Spirit is a distinct being from God, it will not prove that it is a distinct person, but will only prove that it is a dove.

If I should assert that a dolphin is a sea-fowl, and then to prove my assertion bring forward a witness, who would testify that he had seen a dolphin, and that it had a bodily shape like a fish, surely no man in his senses would say that by this testimony I had proved my assertion; yet it would

prove that a dolphin is a sea-fowl, just about as much as the above text proves that the Holy Spirit is a person.

If the fact that God's Spirit has appeared in a bodily shape, will prove that it is a person, coequal, coessential, and coeternal with God, then there must be at least ten persons in the Godhead; because in Rev. iv. 5, John says, "And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." In this text it is as positively asserted that God has seven Spirits, and that they all appeared in a bodily shape, as the record of Christ's baptism proves that the Spirit of God appeared in the shape of a dove. These seven, and the Father, and Son, and the Holy Ghost, that appeared in the shape of a dove, will make ten.

John says, the Lamb has "seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Rev. v. 6. If the Spirit of God that appeared in a bodily shape like a dove, is a distinct person in the Godhead, then these seven horns, and seven eyes must also be distinct persons in the Godhead, because they are as much called *the Spirits of God*, as that which appeared in the shape of a dove is called the Spirit of God. These seven with the other ten would make seventeen persons in the Godhead.

When the Holy Ghost fell on the apostles, "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Acts ii. 3. Here the Holy Ghost is represented as being seen in twelve distinct bodily appearances: and if its being seen in the appearance of a dove will prove that it is one distinct person, then its being seen in the appearance of twelve cloven tongues will prove that it is twelve distinct persons. These twelve added to the other seventeen will make twenty-nine persons in the Godhead. I wish to take no undue advantage in this argument. I ask all my readers to say, whether it does not appear as reasonable to suppose that God is in the shape of a lamp of fire, or a cloven tongue of fire, as a feathered fowl?

God's ordinary way of teaching his creatures is by hearing, but in these instances he added that of seeing. The appearance of the Spirit descending on Jesus in the likeness of a dove was, no doubt, designed to show his innocence and qualify him to perform the work of a Mediator. The seven lamps of fire, and the seven eyes were probably intended to represent seven communicable perfections of God displayed in the gospel; and engraved on Christ the chief corner stone of God's spiritual building, and called by a prophet, "The eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." Zech. iii. 9. chap. iv. 10.

The apostles' commission to baptize, has been often quoted to prove the trinity doctrine. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Mat. xxviii. 19. The Greek word *eis*, which is here rendered *in*, would be more literally rendered *into*. Being baptized *in* or *into* the name of any person, or *into* any thing, is no proof that such person or thing is a God, or an object of worship, but it simply signifies that the persons so baptized professed their belief in the person, or thing *into* which they were baptized; which will appear from the following passages of scripture. "And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying, unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Act. xxi. 3, 4, 5. The word rendered *unto* John's baptism, in the third verse of this chapter is the same Greek word, which in the fifth verse is rendered *in* the name of the Lord Jesus. By being baptized *unto* John's baptism, those persons did not mean that it was a God, they only meant that by receiving baptism at the hand of John, they had professed their belief on one that should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. And when they were

baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, they professed their belief that he had come, and conferred the Holy Spirit on his disciples.

Paul says, “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” Rom. vi. 4. By being baptized into his death, Paul did not mean to convey the idea that his death was a God. He only meant that by baptism they had professed their belief in the death and resurrection of Christ.

The Jews that came out of Egypt “Were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.” 1 Cor. x. 2. The Greek word which is translated *unto* in this text is the same Greek word, which in Mat. xxviii. 19, is rendered *in*. Being baptized *unto* Moses does not prove that he is a God, coequal and coeternal with the Father, but it simply proves that the persons who were so baptized, professed their belief in his doctrine and authority.

In teaching that Christians are all different members of Christ’s body, Paul says, “For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body.” 1. Cor. xii. 13. By being baptized into one body, the apostle did not mean that this body was a God, but he meant that by baptism they professed the faith, and were brought into the fellowship of the one spiritual body of Christ, which is his church.

That being baptized *into* a person, or thing, only means that by baptism, those who were so baptized made a profession of faith in that person or thing, appears from the following text. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.” Gal. iii. 26, 27. In all these passages the words *in*, *into*, and *unto*, are the same in the Greek. From these scriptures it is evident that by being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we should only understand that in submitting to the ordinance of baptism, people took on them the profession of that religion,

which was originated by the Father, communicated through the Son, and impressed on their hearts by God's Holy Spirit: or in other words, that they professed to believe in the religion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The baptismal commission proves nothing about three coeternal persons in the Godhead.

The conclusion of Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians has been urged in support of the trinity doctrine. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." This does not prove that Christ is coequal, or coeternal with the Father; nor does it prove that the Holy Ghost is a distinct person from God. If all three of these are equally God, why is but one of them called God? If the bare mention of Christ, and the Holy Ghost in connexion with God will prove them to be persons, coeternal with the Father, then Paul's love must be a person coeternal with Christ, because in concluding his first letter to the Corinthians, he says, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus."

Paul concludes his epistle to the Romans in these words, "To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." Here he mentions Christ in contradistinction from the only wise God: but if Christ was the infinite God, and possessed wisdom of himself independently, he could not in truth be distinguished from the only wise God. If Christ were the only wise God, the sense of this text would be this, "To God only wise, *be* glory, through God only wise forever. Amen."

"For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." 1 John v. 7. I have no doubt but that this verse is an interpolation; but even if it be genuine, it will by no means establish the common system of the trinity. It will prove that the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, are one in some

sense or other, but it will not prove that they are three distinct coequal, coessential, coeternal persons. The word *equal*, nor the word *eternal*, is not in the text. If the Holy Ghost is nothing more than the spirit of God, then it cannot be a distinct person from God, any more than the spirit of a man is a distinct person from him, but as a man and his spirit are but one being, so God and his spirit are not two beings. If the Holy Ghost is not simply God's spirit, but is a distinct being from the Father, and if the word is Jesus Christ, another distinct being from the Father, then I will conclude that they are one in the same sense that Christ and his Father are one, and this the Saviour himself explains in the following passage: "Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." John xvii. 20.—23. From this text it appears that Christ, and his Father are one in the same sense that Christians are one with him, and with each other; hence it is evident that their being one does not prove that they are in every respect equal with each other, because it is well known that although Christians are one in Christ, and in union and fellowship with each other even as, that is, in the same sense, that Christ and his Father are one, still they are not as great as Christ, nor in every respect equal with one another. I will now state my reasons for believing that this disputed text is a forgery.

Adam Clarke, the great Methodist commentator, who is perhaps the foremost Trinitarian Critick in Biblical literature of the present age, and whose means of information on the subject no one doubts, says "It is wanting in every

manuscript of this epistle written before the invention of printing, one excepted, the Codex Montfortii, in Trinity College, Dublin: the others which omit this verse, amount to one hundred and twelve.” He concludes his note on the text in these words:

“Though a conscientious believer in the doctrine of the ever blessed, holy, and undivided Trinity, and in the proper and essential Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, which doctrines I have defended by many, and even new arguments in the course of this work, I cannot help doubting the authenticity of the text in question.” See Clarke’s Commentary on 1 John, v. 7.

Mr. Buchanan in his researches among the Assyrian Christians in the East says, that this text is wanting in all their ancient manuscripts. In the new translation by Campbell, Doddridge, and McNight, which has been recently reprinted by Alexander Campbell, of Buffalo, Virginia, this text is rejected as spurious—Two considerations give this testimony great weight in my mind. The first is, that the men who made the translation, and the one that printed it in this country have all been famed, and I think justly, for learning and talents of the first order. The second is, that, as they were all Trinitarians, nothing but the clearest conviction of its being an interpolation could have induced them to expunge a text which had been so universally relied on to prove that doctrine.

In the improved version *of* the New Testament, we find the following note on this disputed passage.—“This text, concerning the heavenly witnesses, is not contained in any Greek manuscript which was written earlier than the fifteenth century. 2. Nor in any Latin manuscript earlier than the ninth century: 3. It is not found in any of the ancient versions. 4. It is not cited by any of the Greek ecclesiastical writers, though to prove the doctrine of the trinity they have cited the words both before and after this text. 5. It is not cited by any of the

early Latin fathers, even when the subject on which they treat would naturally have led them to appeal to its authority. 6. It is first cited by Vigilius Tapsensis, a Latin writer of no credit, in the latter end of the fifth century, and by whom it is suspected to have been forged. 7. It has been omitted as spurious in many editions of the New Testament, since the Reformation: in the two first of Erasmus, in those of Aldus, Colinaeus, Zwinglius, and lately of Griesbach. 8. It was omitted by Luther in his German version.— In the old English Bibles of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Elizabeth; it was printed in small types, or included in brackets; but between the years 1566 and 1580, it began to be printed as it now stands; by whose authority it is not known.”

The following text has been urged to prove the existence of a trinity. “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of *God*, and of the Father, and of Christ” Col. ii. 2. Trinitarians think that as the Father and Son are each mentioned separately in this text, that therefore the word *God* must refer to the Holy Ghost, and hence conclude that there are three coequal, coessential, and coeternal persons in the Godhead. I do not think this text proves that there are three persons in the Godhead, but even if it does, it proves nothing about their dignity, equality, nor eternity. For all this text teaches to the contrary, they may all three be of different ages and dignity.

But how do they know that the word *God* in this text refers to the Holy Ghost? The Scripture does not say so. And it appears to me that there is as much evidence to prove that it refers to Moses, as there is to prove that it refers to the Holy Ghost. Moses is called a *God* and a *Mediator* in the Bible. I think the word *God* in the above text alludes to the Father. A mystery is a secret. And the mystery of *God*, spoken of in the text is, no doubt, the calling of the Gentiles and the revelation

of God and Christ, in the relation they bear to each other as Father and Son, which had been a mystery, or secret, from the foundation of the world, but as the whole Gospel plan was bottomed on that relation, it had now become necessary that it should be revealed. Hence it is first called the mystery of God, to show that the whole plan originated in him. Secondly it is called the mystery of the Father, to show that God bears the relation to Christ that a father does to a son. And, thirdly, it is called the mystery of Christ, because he is the Mediator through whom it is revealed.

Although the trinity doctrine is now popular, and a large majority of the Christians call God by the name of trinity, and triune, yet when the Jews shall be restored to their own country, and the Millennium established, "The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." Zech. xiv. 9. If God's name shall be one, it will not be three. *Name* is generally significant of character, and if God is really a trinity of three persons, and if it is essential to the salvation of men so to believe of him, why did the prophet say that his name shall be one?

CHAPTER IV.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF A TRINITY EXAMINED.

The Trinitarians *try to* prove the doctrine of trinity from the Hebrew word Elohim, or as it is written without points, Aleim, which is the first word of the Hebrew Bible that is translated God. They think, that as *Aleim* has a plural termination, there must be a plurality of persons in God. But if we allow this argument, all the weight that Trinitarians append to it, it will by no means prove their system, because it may be the dual number, and of course only refer to the Father and the Son, or if it is plural, it may only mean two; besides let it be what number it may, it proves nothing about equality, nor eternity of persons.

Every scholar knows, and no Christian will deny, that Aleim is a scriptural name of God; therefore if the word Aleim means a plurality, it must signify a plurality of Gods. If the word *man* is the right name of one male person of mature age, then the word men, which is the plural of man, must signify a plurality of such person; so if the word *Al*, in the singular, signifies one self-existent God, then *Aleim*, which is the plural of *Al*, must denote a plurality of self-existent Gods, and, for any thing the word *Aleim* teaches to the contrary, that plurality of Gods may be two, three, or five thousand. But, as no pious Trinitarian will acknowledge that he believes in more than one self-existent God, they certainly must see that the argument proves too much for them, and therefore proves nothing to their purpose.

It is easy to see that this Trinitarian criticism goes as much to support the heathen Polytheism as the Romish trinity, because if there is a plurality of Gods, there may as well be thirty thousand as but three.

If God exists in three persons, and Aleim is the same of those three persons taken collectively, then it cannot be the name of either of them taken separately. Of course the whole triumvirate, or Aleim, did not send their Son to save sinners, it was only the first person of the Aleim, or trinity, that did so; nor did the Aleim, that is the trinity, die for sinners, it was only the second person of the Aleim, or trinity, that did so. If it takes the whole trinity to constitute the supreme God, then Christ, the second person, who died for sinners, must have lacked two thirds of being the supreme God.

In the Hebrew, as well as in all other languages, a King, an Emperor, or any other person of great dignity, is frequently mentioned in the plural number. Thus the King of Spain says, "*We, Ferdinand the seventh.*"—The King of France says, "*We, Charles the tenth.*" The Emperors of Russia say, "*We, Alexander,*" or "*We, Nicholas*" Artaxerxes, the King of Babylon, speaks of himself in the plural, thus, "The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me." Ezra. iv. 18. King Zedekiah speaks of himself in the plural, thus, "As the Lord liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death." Jer. xxxviii. 16. Christ speaks of himself in the plural, thus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you *of* heavenly things?" I have never heard an advocate of this doctrine affirm that Jesus Christ separately considered, is the whole triunity; but on the contrary, they all assert that he is the second person of the trinity. If, then, Christ can speak of himself in the plural number, and still be one individual person, and not a whole trinity, why may not God the Father speak of himself in the plural, and at the same time be only one single person? In Wilson's Hebrew grammar we have the following rule relative to Hebrew nouns:—"Words that express dominion, dignity, majesty, are commonly put in the

plural.” Therefore the word *Aleim* being applied to any being of great dignity, is no proof that such being contains in himself a plurality of persons. The Lord applies this word to Moses, hence he says, “See I have made thee a God [Heb. *Aleim*] to Pharaoh.”—Exod. vii. 1. Surely Moses did not consist of three persons. The children of Heth gave the same title to Abraham; when he applied to them for a burying place, they said, “Thou art a mighty prince among us.” Gen. xxiii. 6. In the Hebrew it reads, a mighty *Aleim* among us: notwithstanding this, Abraham was but one person.

The golden calf that Aaron made is mentioned in the plural number. “And they said these be thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” Exod. xxxii. 4, 8, 31. I now ask, were there three persons in the golden calf?

“Then the Lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their God, and to rejoice; for they said, our God hath delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hand. And when the people saw him they praised their God; for they said our God hath delivered unto our hands our enemy.” Judg. xvi. 23, 24. In every place where Dagon is called God in this passage, the Hebrew is *Aleim*. Although Dagon is called *Aleim*, there is no probability that his worshippers regarded him as a triune God, or as a being that consisted of three coequal persons.

Because that they hate forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the God of the Moabites, and Milchom the God of the children of Ammon.” I King. xi. 33. In each of these places, where God occurs in the English, the Hebrew is *Aleim*. Although the heathen believed in many Gods, we have no evidence that they thought each of them was three persons. Each of these Gods, that is here called an *Aleim*, was, no doubt, believed by its worshippers to be a demon, that is, the ghost of one man, or one woman.

In the above text the original is not *Aleim*, but *Alei*, the *mem* being dropped, because in each place it stands in regimine, or construction, with the following noun, but still it is the same word, and if it was not placed in regimine with the Zidonians, the Moabites, nor the children of Ammon, the Hebrew word would be *literally Aleim*. Although this is well known to every tyro hebrean, I mention it to take away occasion from them who may desire occasion to cavil.

That the word *Aleim* does not mean a plurality of persons, is evident from the following text, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God [Heb. *Aleim*] is one Lord." Deut. vi. 4. If it is essentially necessary for us to believe that the Lord our *Aleim* is three persons, why did Moses tell us that he is one Lord? It is worthy of remark, that our Lord quotes this very text, and mentions the word *God*, by a singular noun in file Greek, thus: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God (Gr. *Theos*) is one Lord." Mark. xii. 29. If the word *Aleim* had been designed to express a plurality of persons in God, surely Christ would not have translated it by a singular noun. If it is a truth that God was six days making the heavens and the earth, Christ would not translate it three days. If Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days, the blessed Saviour would not say that he was in it but one day. If the word *Aleim* in the above text had been placed there to teach that there are a trinity of persons in God, Christ, who came to bear witness to the truth, instead of explaining it to the people, has wholly misrepresented it. A Trinitarian minister, if he would undertake to explain the text at all, would tell the people that the word *Aleim* signifies three persons in the Godhead, coequal, coessential, and coeternal; but Christ says, that *Aleim* is *Theos*, *God* in the singular, that is, "one Lord."

If it be argued that Christ spoke in Hebrew, and therefore did not translate *Aleim* by *Theos*; I answer, that his biographer, Mark, who certainly understood the Hebrew language, and his master's meaning, has so rendered the word

as quoted by Christ: therefore it remains a fact, that if *Aleim* implies a plurality of persons in God, Christ has misinterpreted the word, or else Mark has misrepresented his masters speech.

If the word *Aleim* signifies three coeternal persons, there must be at least six such persons in the Godhead, because in the following passage Christ is called Aleim in contradistinction from another person, who is also called Aleim. "Thy throne, O God [Heb. Aleim] is forever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom, is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, [Heb. Aleim, thy Aleim] hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Psal. xlv. 6, 7. If the word Aleim signifies a trinity, then in the above text we have one trinity anointing another trinity with the oil of gladness above their fellows, that is, I suppose, above their fellow trinities, because if they are all uncreated persons, it cannot mean above their fellow creatures. But if one of these trinities is anointed above the others, how can they all be equal?

Saint Paul, who was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, an excellent Hebrew and Greek scholar, well acquainted with the Hebrew scriptures, and also divinely inspired, translates the above text into Greek by the singular noun *Theos*, God. Thus he says, "Thy throne, O God, [Gr. Theos] is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom: Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, [Gr. *O'Theos*, *O'Theos sou.*] hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Heb. i. 8, 9.

If Paul knew that the word Aleim signified a plurality of persons in the Godhead, and that it is essential to our salvation that we believe so, he has handled the word of God deceitfully, and wilfully changed the truth into a lie, he has translated a plural noun, which signifies *three*, by a singular one, which only signifies *one*.

In addition to the above evidence I would observe,

that in the septuagint the Hebrew *Aleim* is generally translated by the singular noun *Theos*; and is never, as I know of in that version, translated by any word that implies a plurality of persons. This proves beyond all reasonable contradiction, that the Jews did not think that *Aieim* represented a plurality of persons in God.—If the seventy Jewish interpreters, Saint Paul, Jesus Christ, and his biographer, Saint Mark, all render the word *Aleim* in the singular, what authority have we to say, that it signifies a plurality of persons in God? Because the plural pronoun *us* is three or four times applied to God in the old Testament, some people have concluded that there must be three coequal, coessential, coeternal persons, in the Godhead: but I think *me* such conclusion can be fairly drawn from the fact, because he might say *us* with regard to himself, his son, and the rest of his spiritual family, while, at the same time, they are every one dependant on him.

If a father, who has the whole control of his family and estate, speaking in allusion to his household, should say, “We will pitch our crop,” or “We will sell our produce,” it would by no means prove that he thinks any members of his family are as great as himself. If a head workman says to his hands, let us do this, or that work, he does not mean by such language, that each of the hands is equal in authority to himself.— Christ called himself and his Father *us* and *we*. Praying to his Father for his disciples, he says, “That they may be one in us.” And that “They may be one as we are one.” If Christ uses plural pronouns with regard to the Father, why may not the Father use them with regard to the Son, and yet at the same time mean to express no equality by the phrase?

When he said, “Let us make man;” Gen. i. 26, he probably spoke to his Son, because the scripture inform us, that God created all things by Jesus Christ. When he said, “Let us go down and there confound their language;” Gen. xi.

7, and when he said, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us." Isai. vi 8. He probably alluded to his Son and other heavenly messengers, whom he employs to execute his purposes; for at the time he spoke the last of these passages, he was surrounded with the seraphims of glory. And after all I am not certain but that Christ himself made these expressions.

From the evidence I have brought, it is clear that the application of plural pronouns to God was never designed to teach that he consists of three persons.

Here it should be observed, that although there is not one plural pronoun applied to God in the New Testament, and perhaps not more than four in the old; yet he is pointed out in the holy Bible by more than ten thousand singular ones. Therefore if the proof of three persons in God must rest on the numbers of the pronouns that are applied to him in the scripture, the evidence will be against it in a proportion of more than two thousand to one.

If the trinity doctrine is an essential article of the Jewish religion, why is it not mentioned in the old Testament? And why has it happened that not one Jewish writer of any age can be produced, that has advanced or advocated the doctrine? It is certain that many Jewish writings of great antiquity are extant, and it is equally certain that ever since the doctrine of the trinity was invented, its believers have had access to those writings; and yet, notwithstanding all this, they, as far as I am informed, have never been able to produce one book written by a Jew in favor of the trinity. If the Jews had believed the doctrine, they surely would have taught it in their writings. Ever since the trinity doctrine was generally received among Christians, its advocates have taught it more or less in nearly all their religious books. Is it not reasonable to suppose that if the Jews were Trinitarians, they would have expressed it some where in their writings? The supposition that they would for

many centuries be engaged in writing books on religion, and uniformly leave out of all their writings an important doctrine, the belief of which they thought was essential to salvation, defies credulity.

If God is a trinity of three persons, and Jesus Christ is the supreme God, he of course must be three persons. If God the Father exists in a trinity of three persons, and the Son and Holy Spirit are both God in the same sense that the Father is, then each of them must also consist of three persons, and if so, there must be nine persons in the Godhead, because three times three are nine. If to escape the absurdity of nine persons in the Godhead, it be argued that the Son and Holy Spirit are each but one person; I will then ask if God, our heavenly Father, is also but one person? If you answer yes, I shall conclude that you have renounced the doctrine of three persons in God the Father, but if you say the Father consists of three persons, but that the Son and Holy Ghost are each but one person, then you must believe that the Father is three times as great as either of the other two. This destroys the equality of the Father and Son, and runs into the doctrine of five persons in the Godhead, because three in the Father, and one in the Son, and one in the Holy Ghost, make five. If it be argued that either Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, taken separately, is but one person, and that when they are taken collectively they are three persons, then if no *one* of them consists of three persons, the conclusion is irresistible that neither of them is identically the same with either of the other two, but must all be distinct from each other. If the supreme God consists of three persons, and Jesus Christ is but one person, he is but the third part of the supreme God. The same may be said of the Father and Holy Spirit; if the Almighty God is three persons, and each of them but one person, then each of them is two thirds less than the Almighty God. But if Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each one separately considered is three persons, then there must be nine persons in the

Godhead. Let Trinitarians take hold of which horn of this dilemma they choose, it will oblige them to deny that God is either supreme or infinite, because no being can be supreme who has two equals, nor infinite who consists of either three or nine equal parts.

