

THE

16

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

OF THE

DIVINE TRINITY

VINDICATED.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE substance of the following discourse was delivered, in November, 1829, to an audience in the city of Richmond, during the annual meeting of the Synod of Virginia at that place; and was honored at the time, and subsequently, by such favorable suffrages from several of my brethren in the ministry, and other friends, as gave me great encouragement in the purpose of offering it to the public from the press. I have not suffered myself, however, to be hasty in the execution of this purpose. Aware of the supreme importance of the subject, I have carefully reviewed my train of thought, and given to it such improvements as were suggested by the most deliberate reflection. In my statement of the trinitarian doctrine, I have advanced those propositions only which appeared to me distinctly intelligible, and capable of being conclusively established by scriptural evidence: and in my efforts to remove the difficulties attending this doctrine, I have presented some reasonings and illustrations which had proved peculiarly satisfactory to my own mind. The readers of this humble performance will, of course, make up their judgment upon it for themselves. That it may assist

those who honestly search for the truth, and that the interests of evangelical religion may be promoted by it, is my fervent prayer.

MATT. xxviii. 19, last clause. *Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

AMONG our most decisive proofs of the doctrine of the trinity, we always bring forward this clause of the apostolic commission. We understand our Saviour here as authorizing and directing his ministers to consecrate his disciples, by the sacrament of baptism, to the service and glory of the divine, coequal three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And in what other sense can the text be understood? We are not ignorant, indeed, of a very different exposition; the genuine offspring, whether owned or disclaimed, of a system which boasts loudly of its splendid discoveries, and its exclusive conformity to reason. But we see in that exposition no features so attractive as to charm us away from the old creed to the adoption of the new. I ask my hearers to consider it for a moment or two: baptizing them in the name of the eternal God, and of a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary, and of a personified attribute of God, that is to say, his power. Are you prepared to receive this, as a capital specimen of rational Christianity? Is it rational, think you? Does it honor God? Does it not palpably dishonor him? Surely, they who assume a theory which imposes on them the responsibility of expounding scripture at this rate ought to be somewhat cautious, and somewhat modest, in censuring the faith of their trinitarian neighbors.

My design in the present discourse is to call up to view, and to refute, if God enable me, certain objections which have been, and still are vehemently urged against the doctrine of the holy trinity: objections which have

had the chief agency in fastening upon many the chains of durable and fatal error; and by which the tranquillity of more upright and humble minds has often been sorely disturbed, though they finally escaped the deadly snare. To accomplish this design, however, with the better advantage, it is requisite that I previously attempt to give you an accurate statement of the all-important doctrine itself, and a sketch of the evidence by which its truth is demonstrated.

In the enterprise thus announced I engage, if I know any thing of my own heart, with unfeigned humility and diffidence; yet not without a hope that the effort may prove useful in some degree to candid inquirers. I address myself to those who seek for sacred truth in the love of truth. And while I am laying my thoughts before you as perspicuously as I can, allow me to rely upon it that you will regard them with a careful and patient attention.

I. First, then, we believe that there is one living and true God, and no more. Him we acknowledge and adore as Jehovah, the greatest and the best of beings; the eternal, independent, immutable, spiritual being or substance, who is infinite in knowledge, power, and holiness. Most cordially do we abhor, and therefore most sincerely disclaim the holding of a plurality of gods; and we repel, with indignation, the approach of every idea which appears to us to lead to so detestable a result. At the same time, we do not more firmly believe in the unity of God than we also believe that there exists in this one God a threefold personal distinction; not a barely nominal, but a real distinction, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We call it a personal distinction, because, so far as it has pleased God to reveal it to us, we see it exhibited by forms of language, of various kinds, which, according to our apprehension, are only applicable to different persons. Thus, it is such a distinction as admits of being expressed by the use of

the personal pronouns, I, thou, he, and their derivatives; such a distinction that the Son and the Holy Spirit were eternally with the Father; such a distinction that there might be, and we believe that there was, from all eternity, a communion of mutual, perfect love between the ever blessed three; such a distinction that they could and did assume different offices and agencies in the wonderful economy of our salvation. According to this last view, we rejoice to know that the Father sent the Son into our lost world upon the errand of mercy and deliverance; that the Son freely came as the messenger and servant of the Father, and gave himself to him as an offering, and all-sufficient atoning sacrifice, for our redemption; and that the Holy Spirit as freely comes, sent by the Father and the Son, to regenerate, sanctify, and conduct to heaven all those of our race who shall in fact obtain a share in that inheritance of immortal glory. Such a trinity of persons in the Godhead we receive, and feel ourselves bound strenuously to maintain, as a fundamental article of the religion of the gospel; so fundamental that no other leading article of the system can be consistently received, as scarcely any one ever is pretended to be received, where this is rejected.

It may have surprised my attentive hearers that I have not mentioned the eternal filiation of the Son from the Father, and the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. To prevent misapprehension, I beg leave to say that my faith embraces both these propositions as true; and that I conceive them to be points of more than a little importance too, since the eternal personal properties of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are intimated to us by those very titles and relations. Still, I will not assert, for it is not my judgment, that the denial of these particular propositions is an abandonment of the trinitarian faith in its essentials: and therefore I have chosen to leave them out

of my statement, and intend not to treat of them in the subsequent discussion.

II. As we are far from denying that the doctrine of the triune God is, in some respects, an inscrutable mystery; so neither do we need any one to tell us that this doctrine requires the most ample and unequivocal evidence to render it credible. We feel in our own breasts that it does. And we avow, moreover, that on this subject we do not derive, nor have any expectation of deriving one ray of demonstrative light from any other source than the sacred scriptures. At least, for myself I make this avowal. But in that volume of infallible testimony there is evidence so abundant in variety, and so irrefragable in strength, that we find ourselves overpowered by it, and compelled to yield our assent. And I will add, not in the spirit of unkindness, but of good will, that I am unable to see how any human being, endowed with the faculties of a moral agent, and having the bible in his hands, can reject the trinitarian doctrine without a very culpable opposition of heart to the truth.

My sketch of the evidence, additional to the powerful words of my text, though I have thought it an indispensable part of this discourse, must be a very rapid and imperfect one, as I have not time for extended details. But happily there are books, of various sizes, and easily accessible, in which the scriptural proofs are largely collected and methodically arranged(*a*).

I need not pause one moment to establish the unity of God; which is held as an immovable principle by all mankind, from age to age, atheists and pagan idolaters excepted.

It is likewise universally believed, by such as own the authority of the bible, that he whom it calls the Father is a person, and that he is God in the highest sense of

(*a*) The best and most comprehensive work of this kind within my knowledge is Simpson's Plea for the Deity of Jesus, and the Doctrine of the Trinity. 1 Vol. 8vo.

the term. These truths, therefore, it would be superfluous for me to prove.

To any man who should tell me that he denied or doubted the distinct personality of the Son of God, I would offer the single fact that the Father sent the Son into our world, as a sufficient demonstration that the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is a person distinct from the Father. The fact that the Father did send him is asserted over and over in the scriptures: and to say that the sender is the same person with the sent is as glaring an absurdity as it has ever fallen to my lot to encounter. The question now arises, what are the true character and dignity of the Son of God? Is he a creature merely? As to which, by the way, we account it an affair of no consequence at all whether he be deemed a man only, or a super-angelic created spirit in a human body. Or is it so that, along with his complete manhood, in soul and in body, which I shall take for granted, he is God, equal in glory with the Father? This is our faith; and we rest it on various grounds, which make it, in our esteem, as incontestable as any thing can be made by divine revelation.

In the Old Testament, and even in the earliest chapters of it, we meet with intimations of that very truth which we have heard our Lord inculcating so distinctly in the commission given by him to his apostles; a plurality of persons, evidently coequal, in the divine Being. God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness(*b*). After the fall, the Lord God said, behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil(*c*). And in order to defeat the rebellious project of the builders, of Babel the Lord said, let us go down, and there confound their language(*d*). I will not affirm that the truth which I am establishing was as fully known to the ancient Israelites as it is to us: but I feel convinced and submit the idea to you, my hearers, that the texts

(*b*) Gen. i. 26. (*c*) Gen. iii. 22. (*d*) Gen. xi. 7.

which I have quoted from their scriptures, to which small number many others might have been added, can never be rationally accounted for but by reference to the doctrine of the trinity.

The bible applies to Christ our Saviour those names or titles which import supreme divinity. In many passages he is called God. He is designated as the true God(*e*); the great God(*f*); the mighty God(*g*); and God blessed for ever(*h*). He is Jehovah(*i*); claiming that transcendent name; of which God says, I am Jehovah; that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another(*j*).

The bible arrays Christ in those attributes which are peculiar to God; which not only are not, but which cannot be possessed by any created being. To him belongs eternity; an existence without beginning and without end(*k*). He is omnipotent; the most mighty one who has the gift of all control, in heaven and in earth(*l*). He is omniscient; thoroughly acquainted with all things, even the hearts and most secret thoughts of the children of men(*m*). He is omnipresent; filling all things(*n*); so that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them(*o*). He is immutable; the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever(*p*).

The bible ascribes to Christ those works which none but God can perform. Christ is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, that ever were created, without the exception of one single thing(*q*). He is the Preserver of all things; by whom, as we are assured, all things consist(*r*), and he upholds them by the word

(*e*) 1 John v. 20. (*f*) Tit. ii. 13. which ought to be rendered, our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. (*g*) Isa. ix. 6. (*h*) Rom. ix. 5. (*i*) Isa. vi. 1—10. with John xii. 41. Isa. xl. 3. with Matt. iii. 3. (*j*) Isa. xlii. 8.

(*k*) Micah v. 2. with Math. ii. 6. (*l*) Ps. xlv. 3. Matt. xxviii. 18. (*m*) John xxi. 17. Rev. ii. 23. (*n*) Eph. iv. 10. (*o*) Matt. xviii. 20. (*p*) Heb. xiii. 8. (*q*) Col. i. 16. John i. 3. (*r*) Col. i. 17.

of his power(*s*). He is the Governor of the universe; enthroned far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come(*t*). He is the Giver of life(*u*); and it is he who will raise up all the dead at the appointed season(*v*).—He is the Forgiver of sin(*w*); the guilt of which it is the prerogative of God alone to cancel. He is the Bestower of eternal rest and happiness on those who follow him(*x*). And to him is allotted the office of conducting the final, unerring, and most holy judgment of the world at the great day(*y*); an office which the most exalted creature could no more execute than he could clothe himself with the attributes of infinite perfection.

The bible speaks of Christ, in various ways, as the proper object of divine worship. All the angels of God are commanded to worship him(*z*); and it is enjoined that every knee throughout the creation bow at his name, and that every tongue confess him to be the Lord(*a*). The ancient saints rendered to him that homage which is due to God only: Abraham in his intercession for Sodom(*b*); and David in those devout ascriptions of praise, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; and of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands(*c*). Thomas, the disciple, addressed his risen Master, without being censured for it, in the adoring language, my Lord and my God(*d*). Stephen, the first Christian martyr, filled with the Holy Spirit, committed his departing soul to Christ; and besought him to pardon the atrocious murder of which the petitioner was at that moment the victim(*e*). Every one knows that St. Paul

(*s*) Heb. i. 3. (*t*) Eph. i. 20, 21. (*u*) John v. 21. (*v*) John v. 28, 29. (*w*) Matt. ix. 6. Col. iii. 13. (*x*) John x. 27, 28. (*y*) John v. 22. Matt. xxv. 31—46. (*z*) Heb. i. 6. (*a*) Phil. ii. 10, 11. (*b*) Gen. xviii. throughout. (*c*) Ps. xlv. 3—7. and Ps. cii. 24—27. compared with Heb. i. 8—12. (*d*) John xx. 28. (*e*) Acts 7. 59, 60.

often prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ(*f*). In a word, from the universal custom among the primitive Christians of praying to Christ, they received both from friends and foes, the distinguishing title of those who called upon the name of Christ as their Lord(*g*).

There are texts of scripture, not a few, which speak of our Saviour as in a state of lowliness and humiliation; and some which expressly represent him as being inferior to God his Father. You do not expect me to enter critically here into the particulars. I simply observe, and that with the most fearless confidence, that all those texts admit of an easy explication, in entire consistency with our doctrine, by a just resort to the human nature of our Redeemer, or to his mediatorial office: while the multiplied testimonies by which his full divinity is supported cannot possibly be criticised away without inflicting torture upon the scriptures, contrary to all established rules of interpretation; such torture as can never be excused, unless it shall first have been ascertained that the bible is the most unintelligible, and yet the most delusive and mischievous book in the world.

I proceed to speak of the Holy Spirit. And supposing it to have been proved, as I think it has been invincibly proved, that the Son of God possesses a glory truly divine, no man will differ from me in the sentiment that this renders it easier to our minds than it would otherwise be to ascribe the same divine glory to him who is denominated the Spirit of God. If the proof be sufficient, we find less intrinsic difficulty in believing that there is a third person in the Godhead than we did in the belief of the second.

It is the custom of those antagonists whom I have

(*f*) 2. Cor. xii. 8. 9. 1 Thess. iii. 11, 12. 2Thess. ii. 16, 17.

(*g*) 1 Cor. i. 2. Among the early enemies of Christianity, Lucian reproaches the Christians for worshipping their crucified Teacher: Celsus objects to them their adoration of his Godhead: and Porphyry says that they weakly worshipped Christ. It would be easy to cite much more to the same purpose.

chiefly in my eye to assert that the Spirit of God is not properly a person at all, divine or created; but only that this Spirit is the power of God, invested by a figure of speech called personification, with the appearance of a personal agent. Now personification, by which things without life are represented as living and acting, is a beautiful and striking figure, belonging mostly to the provinces of poetry and eloquence, and capable of being used with a wide extension of freedom. But it has its limits of propriety: and we are to recognise it only by the instantly manifested features which it wears, or by the necessity of inferring it from some truth previously known.

We find actions and properties uniformly attributed in scripture to the Holy Spirit which decisively characterize, if any thing can do it, a real, not a rhetorical or figurative person; and which are very often specially incongruous to the idea of personified power. For example; the Spirit searches and knows all things(*h*); testifies of Christ(*i*); bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God(*j*); makes intercession for the saints(*k*); works in the souls of men, dividing his gifts to every man severally as he will(*l*). All these are, at first blush, the acts of an intelligent and voluntary personal agent: and where is the necessity of imputing them to any personified attribute of God? Again, the Holy Spirit is said to be pleased(*m*), which is literally true. He is said to be vexed or grieved(*n*), which is a figurative representation. How can either of the two apply to the attribute of power? Father; the wicked Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit(*o*). In doing this, he perpetrated an enormous crime. Was it an insult offered to the power of God singly? And as to the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, can

(*h*) 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. (*i*) John xv. 26. (*j*) Rom. viii. 16.
 (*k*) Rom. viii. 26, 27. (*l*) 1 Cor. xii. 12, 11. (*m*) Acts xv. 28.
 (*n*) Isa. lxiii. 10. Eph. iv. 30. (*o*) Acts v. 3.

we believe it to consist in speaking reproachfully of the divine power, while reproach uttered against any or all of the other perfections of Deity admits of forgiveness? The thing is perfectly incredible. To one who reads his bible with an unsophisticated heart, willing to follow whithersoever it may lead him, this whole attempt must look like a perverse and daring adventure in favor of some preconceived hypothesis. Could this adventure succeed; and also the kindred one, which aims to metamorphose into the attribute of wisdom the eternal Word, who was with God, and was God(*p*), who was made flesh, and dwelt among us(*q*); one sure effect would be that, instead of our precious bible, we should have in our hands a mass of childish riddles, as paltry and useless as the Koran of the Arabian impostor.

In the same way that we proved the true divinity of the Son of God, we prove as well that of the Holy Spirit; namely, by the divine titles, attributes, works, and worship, which are ascribed to him in the sacred volume.

He is there expressly called God. St. Peter charges Ananias with having lied unto the Holy Spirit; and presently adds, thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God(*r*). He is likewise named Jehovah. St. Paul says to the unbelieving Jews at Rome, well spake the Holy Spirit by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers, saying, go unto this people, and say, hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive; and the rest(*s*). Now by turning back to Isaiah, we learn that it was Jehovah who gave this message to the prophet(*t*).

The incommunicable attributes of the Deity belong to the Holy Spirit. Thus he is denominated the eternal Spirit, through whom Christ offered himself without spot to God(*u*). The Psalmist declares his omnipre-

(*p*) John i. 1. (*q*) John i. 14. (*r*) Acts v. 3, 4. (*s*) Acts xxviii. 25, 26, 27. (*t*) Isa. vi. 8, 9, 10. (*u*) Heb. ix. 14.

sence, by asking, whither shall I go from thy Spirit(*v*)? And omniscience must be his; since he searches all things, yea the deep things of God(*w*).

His works are divine. We believe him to be the Creator; because we are informed that God by his Spirit hath garnished the heavens(*x*), and are taught to unite with Elihu in saying, the Spirit of God hath made us(*y*). To the same glorious Agent is attributed that inspiration whence we derive the holy scriptures; for we know that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit(*z*). And throughout the New Testament, the whole process of our sanctification is said to be carried on, from beginning to end, by the Holy Spirit, as his appropriate work; a work requiring all infinite perfections for its execution, as clearly as they are requisite for the creation and preservation of the world.

Were there no other means of proof that divine worship is rightly offered up to the Spirit of God, it would be sufficient for me to hear the celebrated benediction recorded by the apostle Paul; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all(*a*). This passage is of the same class with our text from the commission of the apostles; and is a prayer for the greatest of blessings, addressed equally to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. How can it be construed as merely a kind wish of the apostle for his brethren, without any supplication to God in their favor? They who so construe it must know little of the spirit and habits of St. Paul. Again; it was revealed to good Simeon, by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And when he took up the infant Saviour in his arms, he blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,

(*v*) Ps. cxxxix. 7. (*w*) 1 Cor. ii. 10. (*x*) Job xxvi, 13. (*y*) Job xxxiii. 4. (*z*) 2 Pet. i. 21. (*a*) 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation: rapturously adoring God the Spirit, who had given, and had fulfilled to him the promise of so high a privilege(*b*).

In closing this survey of our evidence, cursory as it is, may I not appeal to all men on its validity; and ask, if the bible does not establish the trinitarian doctrine, by what conceivable form of revelation could it be established? And again; if such proofs as have passed under our review may, after all, deceive us, how can we rely upon the bible as teaching us, with certainty, any thing concerning God, or concerning any other subject? It behooves me, however, to remember that those with whom I am contending refuse to be checked by such considerations. With courage worthy of a better cause, they assert that the doctrine of the trinity shall not be found in the bible: and to come to the point roundly, that no possible evidence could make this doctrine credible; forasmuch as it involves within itself sundry objections or difficulties of such magnitude and force as to be absolutely insurmountable. And this brings me to

III. My principal object, which is to meet, and as I humbly trust, to overthrow these boasted objections.

1. In the first place, then, it is objected that a divine trinity in unity, or the doctrine that one God exists in three persons, is an incomprehensible mystery, and therefore not rationally to be believed.

Now the words, an incomprehensible mystery, may be intended to convey either of two different meanings; to both of which I shall ask your attention, while I bring them to a fair trial.

One of them is, that though some things be supposed to be proved to us, and understood by us, in regard to the triune God; the subject has depths of obscurity which the human mind cannot fathom, and suggests questions which no man is able to answer. This I rea-

(*b*) Luke ii, 25—30.

dily concede to be the case. Respecting the divine unity, we acknowledge that it differs, in some way which we cannot search out, from that of the soul of man: for in the one God there is a personal plurality; whereas a human soul is incapable of being more persons than one. And the thing which we call personality in the Godhead differs, in some way equally unsearchable, from personality in ourselves: for every human person is one separate human being; while the divine persons do not and cannot exist in a state of separation from each other. In these things, so intimately conjoined with what we do know of the trinity, lies that mysteriousness of the nature of God, to the grasping and unfolding of which our short-sighted understandings are totally incompetent. Nor do we think it probable that these mysteries will ever come within the grasp of any creature. But in the existing state of our philosophy, which is as ready to make a frank confession of ignorance as to rejoice in the discovery of truth, much reasoning certainly cannot be necessary to show that the objection, in this view of it, is altogether inadequate to its purpose. Nearly all our various knowledge, not one of its provinces entirely exempted, comes under the very same humbling description with our knowledge of the divine trinity. We know something, less or more, about the object which we contemplate; while there are difficulties connected with it, to the solution of which we are not, and perhaps may never become competent.

For instance; by an act of volition I instantaneously put into motion the limbs of my body; these limbs which always remain still and quiet while I do not choose to move them. Over my heart, which moves incessantly, without my choosing it, or even thinking of it, I have no such control: no volition of mine, however intense, can stop that motion for one second of time. What philosophical account can be given of these matters of fact? How does the volition of my spirit act upon my

corporeal organs? Why will it not suspend the action of my heart? Upon these inquiries no mortal has ever thrown one particle of light; and we may boldly predict that none ever will. Shall I then attempt to reject or doubt of facts which I know by constant experience, because they carry in their train mysteries which are utterly inexplicable? Nothing could be more repugnant to the common sense of mankind.

Even in mathematical science, which glories so justly in its irresistible demonstrations, our minds sometimes flounder about in inextricable embarrassment. Allow me to give you an example or two, in as few words as possible.

Suppose me to be journeying along the highway; and that you, with youthful feet, which bear you forward twice as fast as mine bear me, set out, at the distance of one mile in the rear, to overtake me. How far must you travel to place yourself by my side? Two miles, you answer; and all the world assents to what you say, without the possibility of hesitation. Yet against the effecting of this thing there is an apparent demonstration, which it may puzzle any one to refute: namely, that for every furlong, yard, or foot, that you advance upon me, I shall, in the same time, have gone one half of the same distance ahead; and the minutest subdivisions of space will never bring this process to a close.

Again; suppose a plane superficies two feet wide, and extended both ways without end. Suppose another one foot wide, and extended in like manner. Can you keep the conviction away from your mind that the former of these must contain twice as many square feet of surface as the latter? I confess that I cannot escape this conviction. Yet in making this avowal, we undertake to assert that one quantity, an infinite one, to be sure, is as large again as another quantity which is also infinite.—Take a step farther, and suppose a plane surface infinitely extended in every direction. Hence will result

an infinitude of infinitudes of superficial square feet.— Nor are we yet near the end of this amazing path. What should hinder us from supposing an infinitude of plane surfaces every way infinitely extended?

But I desist from these illustrations; in the apprehension that they are unnecessarily consuming our time. If we find ourselves, at every turn, thus baffled in our researches; is it at all strange that we should get into danger of losing ourselves in the endeavour to sound, with our short and feeble line, the deep things of God; to remove all clouds of mystery from the nature and the mode of existence of Jehovah, the King eternal, immortal, and invisible? Our proper course is, to pursue the investigation of truth with a zeal and perseverance always proportioned to its value; and to stop when we arrive at insuperable barriers, acknowledging the inadequacy of our powers to transcend them, but holding with a firm grasp whatever we have ascertained to be true by appropriate and sufficient evidence. If we proudly forsake this high road of wisdom; if we stubbornly refuse to believe any thing, until we have cleared up every thing involved in it, or situated in its neighborhood; the only alternative wearing any face of consistency is to plunge ourselves into general scepticism, which is but another name for general folly and infatuation.

But it was observed that this charge of incomprehensible mystery might be intended, and I doubt not that it is most commonly employed, to convey another idea.— And here is a much heavier imputation than the former: even this; that our doctrine of the trinity is, in root and branch, quite unintelligible; that it excites no conceptions in the mind; in short, that any proposition which pretends to exhibit this article of our faith is merely a collection of words altogether destitute of meaning. Now if this were true, I should certainly think it fatal to the doctrine: for I most heartily subscribe to the maxim that no man, in the exercise of his rational faculties, can possibly be-

lieve any proposition to which he attaches no meaning whatever. But we utterly deny the truth of this charge. We have owned the mysteriousness of our doctrine, and have indicated the things in which it lies. But we say also, and our consciousness bears us out in the assertion, that we know what we mean by the position that God is one infinite, all-glorious, spiritual substance, undivided and indivisible. And we are equally sure that we are not stringing together unmeaning words when we speak of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as personally distinguished in the way which was offered to view in an early part of this discourse. Our knowledge, indeed, of the divine personalities is wholly of an indirect, relative character; yet it is not on that account the less real, or the less interesting to us. As I take this to be a matter of great importance in the discussion in which I am engaged, I must have leave to dwell upon it somewhat at large.

We know a thing directly when we view it, and become acquainted with it, as it is in itself, without reference to any other thing. And along with this direct knowledge, or where this is entirely unattainable, it is familiar to us to know an object relatively: that is, we perceive some connexion which it sustains with other objects, some agency which it carries on, or some result which it produces.

A vast portion of the multifarious knowledge which we do or may acquire is of the very kind which I have denominated relative. I will mention two or three instances by way of sample; and you will see with facility their application to the case in hand.

I ask, what is the thing signified by the word power? You tell me that this word means about the same as strength, faculty, capacity, ability. Well, so it does.—But I did not crave of you mere synonymous terms; and therefore must repeat my question, what is power? And now you reply, that power, in ourselves, for exam-

ple, is not a substance, material or immaterial; nor is it any operation or feeling of our minds, of which we can, in the strict, philosophical sense of the expression, be conscious: but it is a property which God has given us, and continues to sustain within us, by which, in conjunction with the exertions of our will, we produce certain effects, internal or external. Power, you remark, may rest inactive for weeks and months, but truly exist all the while, ready for action: and even at the instant when we are exercising it, we have no immediate conception of its nature. This is the answer which I wanted, and which all who hear it perceive at once to be the truth. All men speak familiarly of power, daily and hourly; and distinguish, with entire confidence, between their volitions, of which they are conscious, and their powers, of which they have no other than relative ideas. But though we have none but relative ideas of power, we feel ourselves entitled to treat with scorn any assuming philosophy which asserts that power itself has no existence; or that our language respecting it is no more than words and sentences put together without real and intelligible meaning.

Again; when we see any person manifesting the same passion, or performing actions of the same kind, in a continued and uniform series, as often as circumstances of one and the same description occur to him, we feel within ourselves an irresistible impulse to ascribe such series to some permanent source or cause existing in the breast of the individual. And to this cause we give the name of disposition. Thus we speak of an irascible, an avaricious, a beneficent disposition, and a great many others. I desire now to know what disposition is. The words, temper, proneness, tendency, have the same import, or nearly the same. But what is the thing itself? It is not the soul, but belongs to the soul as an attribute. It often lies a long time dormant; and we never at any time directly perceive it, nor are conscious of it. We

can only say that it is a mysterious something, brought into repeated action by the return of circumstances; and that all our knowledge of it is purely relative, derived from its results, which take place from time to time.— Yet no man will be so hardy as to accuse people of prating in unintelligible and insignificant words, or in homely style, of speaking nonsense, whenever they talk about their own or each other's dispositions. If any one should tell them so, they would soon punish his temerity with their irrepressible ridicule.

Once more; permit me to start the inquiry, what is the soul? You are fully convinced, you assure me, that the soul is a substance, and not merely a quality of a substance. Truly, so am I; and moreover that the soul is a substance not made of matter. These two things, then, we will set down, the one a positive, the other a negative proposition, as our direct knowledge of the soul, so far as they go. But may not my curiosity be farther gratified? Have you nothing more to give me, on my renewing and pressing the question, what is this soul of mine? Here you inform me, it is that which, with one abiding, individual identity, thinks, and remembers, and judges, and chooses, and loves, and hates, and so on.— Well, this is all true: but it makes me feel something like a disappointment. It was my wish, had the thing been practicable, to gain a full view, not of what the soul does, but directly of what it is in itself. But this appears to be plainly impossible. Excepting the two facts recently mentioned, that the soul is a substance, and that it is not a material substance, all our attainable knowledge of the soul is indirect, all our conceptions are relative.— Those exceptions convey to us no more than a very small stock of information. And for the rest, we are utterly debarred from contemplating the nature of the soul immediately, as doubtless its adorable Creator does with infinite ease, by an inspection of it which needs to borrow no aid from its emotions or its operations. Ne-

vertheless, we know much that is both sure and weighty about our own souls: and difficult as the acquisition of this kind of knowledge is, we may hope to learn very much more, even in the present and dark world. Nor will any man in his sober senses hazard the affirmation, that what we call knowledge on this highly important subject must of necessity be mere words and phrases devoid of meaning.

And now I persuade myself that my hearers will find no perplexity in tracing the connexion of these several illustrations with the point which occasioned them, the distinction of the persons in the triune Jehovah. If you require me to declare what is the personal distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I must own that, directly, I cannot do it: I must, as to this, even lay my hand upon my mouth. I know not at all what the distinction in itself is, but bow reverentially to it as an unfathomable mystery. But under the guidance of the word of God, I can tell some things, relatively, concerning this profound mystery: and may promise that those hearers who have not the habit of laborious study, as well as those who are accustomed to it, shall readily understand what is offered to their minds. The distinction is such that the divine three could and did eternally exist with one another, and so must continue for ever to exist, in a most blessed intercommunion of mutual love. It is such a distinction that each of the divine persons assumed a different part or office; and each began, and still proceeds to execute his particular office, in the complex, glorious work of delivering us, sinners of Adam's race, from everlasting perdition, and making us heirs, and in due time possessors of an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Do we need any mighty genius, or abstruse learning, in order to apprehend the meaning of such communications from heaven as these? Thanks be to God, we do not. We know whom we trust as our Father and our Teacher, and what it is that

we believe on his authority. Thus palpably is our doctrine the reverse of that chaos of impenetrable obscurity which our adversaries frequently represent it to be; and thus easy has it been found, if I am not much deceived, to prostrate to the dust one of the most annoying pieces of their artillery.

2. 'The next objection to be considered has also, until we resolutely grapple with it, a very formidable appearance. It is said that our trinitarian doctrine is unworthy even of any serious attention, aside from that of exposing it to prompt and unqualified rejection; as it carries upon its very face the broad features of self-contradiction: that it is as absurd to pronounce God to be one, and yet personally three, as to say, that three and one are exactly the same number.

This is indeed a fierce and undisguised assault. We are puzzled by no shadow of ambiguity here. As we pass along, it ought to be remembered that those who advance this objection bind themselves, by doing so, to abandon the reproachful imputation of unmeaningness which has been so profusely cast upon our doctrine.— For they not only admit that the doctrine of the trinity has a meaning; but aver that they see in it two meanings, and see them so clearly as to authorize the charge that they are in diametrical opposition to each other. But leaving this, I most willingly agree that as soon as any proposition is fairly convicted of self-contradiction, it loses all claim to respect: and no man can warrantably complain of its being treated thenceforward with all the severity of contempt and derision. That no trinitarian controvertist has ever brought upon his own head the well grounded charge of being inconsistent with himself, I will by no means take upon me to assert. I fear that this has many a time been done; and they who do it must abide the consequences of their own indiscretion. But with those consequences we have nothing to do, provided we make our statements, and conduct our de-

fence, with modesty and circumspection. Having prescribed to ourselves this rule, and feeling no consciousness of forgetting or neglecting it, we repel the objection levelled against us, as having no touch of application; and honestly proclaim that from this weapon, so sanguinely confided in by those who wield it, we escape without a wound. Our principle is, to labour, with earnest prayer and indefatigable study, to know whatever God has been pleased to unveil to us in his word on the unparalleled theme of his triune existence; and not to excogitate hazardous formulas or similitudes of our own, nor to rush forward into the shadowy, unbounded wilderness of speculation, after the torch of revealed truth has ceased to enlighten our way. Did we maintain, either in so many words, or under any covert and circuitous modes of expression, however artfully devised, that the one true God is three gods; that God is only one divine person; and yet three divine persons; or that God is one and three in any selfsame point of view; here would be outrageous contradiction of ourselves, and inconsistency of the first magnitude.—Were we so blind that we could not see the absurdity, while it stared us in the face, we should be objects of pity for the wretched imbecility of our minds. But did we see it, and still persist in urging our fellow men to receive and venerate it; no energy of detestation, no vehemence of censure, could go one hair's breadth beyond our demerit. Most just is the assertion, and none shall take the lead of us in defending it against all assailants, that the bible was never designed by its Author to disparage that reason which he has given us; by which, as our noble privilege, he has raised us above the brutes that perish, and rendered us accountable subjects of his moral government. But by what means can the idea be demonstrated to be self-contradictory, or in any other way absurd, that the infinite God may be, in different respects, one and more than one; so far forth,

that his most glorious nature may admit of a real, three-fold distinction, which, if disclosed to us, we must esteem and call a personal one? It is sufficiently evident to me that, supposing the existence of this distinction, our reason, proud of it as we are apt to be, would never have discovered one syllable of the matter without light from above(c). But when God has made known to us, as decidedly, and to some extent as luminously, as any thing also contained in his own authentic volume of revelation, that such, in very deed, is his character; let candid reason itself answer the question, what is there to forbid our receiving the doctrine, so manifested by him who cannot lie, with cordial and adoring submission?

Our opponents profess to entertain a considerable degree of respect for the authority of the bible. Sometimes they speak of that book in terms like our own.— Yet, with a haughty spirit of self-sufficiency, as if it were theirs to find out the Almighty to perfection, they dare to decide, first of all, by the light of their own rash assumptions and syllogisms, and without deigning to consult the inspired record, that the great God is not only but one in his substance, but also that he is personally but one, and can be no more. Having taken this stand, and glorying in their adherence to it; however abundantly, and however pointedly, the bible may contradict the sentiment which they have adopted, they obstinately refuse to give up their perilous enterprise.— All scriptural declarations in favor of the trinity they bend, and twist, and torture, by the machinery of violent criticism, until they are explained away, as signifying something else, or as signifying just nothing at all. We look at their proceedings with a mixture of wonder, and

(c) In the theological systems of several heathen countries, in Asia and elsewhere, notions are found of a heavenly trinity; greatly obscured indeed, but still too visible to be reasonably denied.— Whence could these notions derive their origin? They can be no other than fragments of divinely revealed truth, which have floated down on the current of tradition from the remotest ages.

disgust, and sorrow: and the image presents itself of men gravely and busily at work in trying to annihilate the mighty cataract of the Niagara by casting straws upon its face. All this while, our industrious anti-trinitarian critics vaunt their system as pure, uncorrupted Christianity; and announce themselves as the only people, among professing Christians, who worship one God alone. By natural consequence, we are made to bear the title of tritheists in their vocabulary. They may forbear to arraign us as hypocrites: but as to the supremely important concern of the formation of our religious creed, they charge us, in effect, with an amount of heedlessness or stupidity which would deprive us of even the lowliest pretensions to the character of rational beings. Upon this usage on their part, our emotions are not those of resentment, but of deep commiseration for the state of their souls. The awful day is coming which will settle the entire dispute between them and us perfectly: and the merits of it are well estimated in this present life by all who receive the love of the truth that they may be saved.

3. The last objection which I shall bring to your notice is, that the doctrine of the trinity is an airy notion, a merely curious speculation; utterly incongruous, for this reason, to every just idea of our Christian faith. It is asserted that, excepting its tendency to foment toilsome and bitter controversies, which we may avoid if we please, and which it were better to avoid for the sake of peace, this doctrine cannot in any way influence our hearts, nor modify our conduct; that we are not, in a moral view, rendered either better or worse by our adoption or rejection of it; and therefore that we need not feel solicitous about it, and ought not to suppose that it makes any part of the revelation which God has put into our hands.

Now this accommodating, latitudinarian talk sounds to our ears rather strangely. Here must be a fresh in-

stance of discord in the camp of our enemies. We have occasionally heard from that camp trumpet-notes loud and solemn, claiming to be prompted by zeal for the divine honour, and warning us of the peril of our idolatry in paying homage, as we notoriously do, to our Lord Jesus Christ as God. What is become of this heavy indictment? Was it used simply as a trick of war? Was it a spectre hypocritically conjured up, and brought on the stage, to frighten us out of our evangelical sentiments? Such, we trust, could not be the fact. Instead of entertaining the suspicion of such gross insincerity, we will ask leave of those our monitors to warn them, in our turn, against the danger of worshipping a deity who does not exist, in lieu of the triune God of the bible.—As to these other heroes of the hostile army, the patrons of the objection before us, which regards the whole affair as a thing of no moment, we present to them the following dilemma, and desire them to see how they are to make their way safely out of it; either that we are not idolaters, though we recognize as God him whom they call, as the Jews did of old, the carpenter's son; or that, according to their system of theology and morals, idolatry is a peccadillo, which weighs not a feather in the estimation of moral character. The alternative presses fairly upon them: which side of it will they, after due advisement, prefer? Shall I stop here, and wait for their answer? I would do so, did I not believe that it may be edifying to go forward, at some length, upon this final branch of our subject.

Contemplating the bible as a revelation from God to man, I ask my considerate hearers, must we not infer it to be an astounding, nay, an impossible thing, that this divine book should contain such and so much evidence as was exhibited, even by our very hasty selections, in proof of a theory unworthy of our serious thought; a theory which, if true, would yet turn out to be only an airy, fruitless speculation? Does not every one who re-

ceives this holy volume as the gift of God know that it was bestowed upon us for purposes far different from that of fostering and gratifying an idle, ever roving curiosity? Yes, assuredly; and we say that we derive from the doctrine which I have been defending not barely some intellectual knowledge of the nature of the eternal God, but also many vastly important practical advantages. We look upon this doctrine as the soul of the bible. We feel that if our faith in the trinity were taken away, our best principles of action in this world would, in the twinkling of an eye, lose their power, and all our hopes in reference to the world to come would sink into irremediable desolation.

This is clearly a question of fact and experience, to be decided by the medium of testimony. And when we undertake to make out such a decision upon it, we claim only to be allowed those common faculties which enable a man to know his own affections and motives, and that common honesty which entitles a witness to credit when he speaks of things which come under his deliberate observation. Perhaps our adversaries will admit our claim to these qualifications, and perhaps they will not. Be that as it may, I deem it one precious reward of my present labour to know that, in uttering this testimony, I am the representative of my beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord who surround me here, and of all the millions of his people who are scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. How extensive, and how delightful, is this communion!

We testify, then, that our reverence for the written word of God, and our love of it, are inseparably interwoven with our belief of his triune character. We receive the bible as a work of divine inspiration throughout; the only infallible, and in all essential points, the plain and perspicuous rule of our faith and practice.— This we could not do, if we rejected the doctrine of the trinity; if we discarded the unity of Jehovah, or the

real personality and coequal deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: for we see the traces of this great comprehensive doctrine marked, either expressly or by necessary implication, on many, very many pages of the sacred scriptures. Sure I am that any such modes of interpreting scripture as would make me cease to be a trinitarian would also render me, not what is called Unitarian, but a finished and avowed deist. I could no longer consent to be hampered by any undefinable authority of a book, call it by way of eminence the bible, or what else you please, which I must account so dark and confused, so calculated to mislead and bewilder the mind of its reader: but should find myself invincibly compelled to pronounce the whole collection a mass of wild folly, or of wicked imposture; an object not of respect, but of rooted and sovereign contempt. How far many of the opposers of the trinitarian faith have gone in scoffing at the book of God, while they professed to be explaining and recommending it, the Christian world is at the present day pretty well apprised. And what should we be, what should we do, without our Bible? Imagine to yourselves how dreadful the condition, to be travelling onward compulsively upon the face of this blighted, thorny earth, conscious that we are, in some degree or other, sinners before God; trembling sometimes, in spite of our efforts to the contrary, under presentiments of a coming judgment, and an eternal retribution; yet wandering and staggering along, enveloped with clouds of dubious conjecture, and strongly tempted to take this fleeting, unsatisfactory world for our idol and our all; having no sure guide to lead us by the hand, and inspire us with a cheerful reliance that we may arrive at peace here and heaven hereafter. From making the journey of life under such baleful auspices as these may God preserve us! Blessed be his name, we have in our possession his own attested, undeceitful word; and he gives us faith to confide in it, as a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path.

He gives us the animating, still growing hope that, under the direction of this wise and faithful guide, we shall reach the never fading paradise of felicity above the skies.

But we must extend this testimony, brethren, yet somewhat farther. We will enter into some particulars which are interesting in no ordinary degree, and which are perfectly conclusive as to the objection under consideration.

The bible exhibits to us a God glorious in holiness, who rules in spotless righteousness the world which he has made. It lays before us his moral law, a code most just, and exceedingly broad in its demands upon us; yea, most spiritual and heart-searching, as it takes cognizance of the inmost recesses and hidden motions of our souls, as well as of all our visible actions. The bible charges us with a depraved nature, full of enmity and rebellion against God, our Maker and our Benefactor; and with actual transgressions, in thought, word, and deed, more in number than the hairs of our heads: and it assures us that God knows this depravity of ours in all its vileness and malignity; sees every one of our sins in all its circumstances of aggravation; and pronounces against us the dismaying sentence that we deserve his vengeance through the ages of an interminable existence. And when these things are brought home to our bosoms, our own reason declares that they are all true, and binds them down upon us as solemn realities. The more we reflect, let it only be done with an upright spirit, the more are we overwhelmed with the conviction that we are lost and undone sinners in the sight of God, from whose eye and whose arm there is no way of escape. And now the anxious inquiry arises, far above all earthly anxieties, what will become of us? How shall we stand, in our sins, at the tribunal of this terrible God? How shall we, whose provocations have been heaped up like mountains before him, obtain his protection against eternal misery and des-

pair, and his kindness to make us for ever happy? The assertion that repentance and future obedience will procure for us these mighty benefits sounds like a mockery of our affliction. Has God, to whom alone the decision belongs, told us that they will? We cannot see how penitential tears, and amendment of life, are to make it consistent with the honor and the government of this holy God that he should blot out our past iniquities, and receive us into his favor. And besides; this repentance, and this new obedience, if they mean any thing worthy of their names, are not at our command; so complete is our criminal helplessness, so utterly dead are we in the sinfulness of our fallen nature. Thus we look around for some eye to pity, some arm to save: but until the gospel comes, we look to the earth and to the heavens in vain. In God's gracious hour, the gospel does come; and it is good tidings of great joy, the very dawning of heaven upon our benighted souls. What a world of wonders does it open to our enraptured vision!

The gospel presents to us, for our acceptance and confidence, a divine Redeemer, the only begotten Son of God. We trace the history of our Immanuel, God manifested in the flesh, from his lowly birth at Bethlehem, through his life of poverty and harrassing persecution, of piety, and beneficence, and stainless purity, until we behold him nailed to the accursed tree, and slowly expiring there, an offering for our sins, a ransom for our souls. We hear him proclaiming, with his dying breath, it is finished; the sin of the world is born away, the gates of boundless mercy are unfolded to mankind. We hail him rising triumphant from the dead; and listen to the words of blessing which he pours upon his disciples as he ascends to his throne of glory on high.—While we gaze, and while we hearken, our hearts burn within us; and conclusions begin to crowd upon us more to be prized than thousands of gold and silver. How astonishing is the love of the Father, who spared not his

own Son, but gave him up, for our deliverance from the horrible abyss of perdition, to the tormenting malice of earth and hell; yea, to sorrows and agonies inconceivable, such as none but the hand of the Almighty himself could inflict! How far transcending all our thoughts and all our praises is the compassion of the Prince whom angels adore, the Lord of glory, who loved us, and gave himself for us! How gigantic, how portentous, is the evil of sin, which pierced and murdered the Son of God; sin, which rendered such an atonement as this necessary, in order that he whose name is Love might be at once a just God and a Saviour! How divinely are all his attributes harmonized and illustrated in the cross of Jesus Christ! What an immovable foundation has God laid in Zion, upon which we, hell-deserving apostates and self-destroyers, are invited to build our immortal hope! What guilt can be so enormous, that the blood of this Lamb of God cannot wash it away? What treasure of heavenly bliss so costly, that his righteousness cannot merit it for his poor, insolvent followers? Where are the foes so subtle, or so powerful, that we need to doubt of achieving the victory over them, through the preeminence and under the conduct of this illustrious Captain of our salvation? In such views as these, we surrender ourselves joyfully and unreservedly to God.—We exult in the smiles of his face, and pour out our thanks and our petitions before him as our reconciled and condescending Father. We enlist ourselves as soldiers under Christ our Master, who conquered in our cause even when he fell; who arms us for our sacred warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and who pledges his never forfeited word, that he will lead us on to a consummate and everlasting triumph over all his and our enemies. His love is our refuge and our resting place; his voice inspires us with courage and with patience; and the hope that we shall go, one day, to see him, and to dwell with him where he is, tunes our hearts and our lips

to songs of gladness in this land of our pilgrimage.— And are we yet to be sneeringly told that our faith in his divinity is a childish, inoperative fancy? To all those who think so, may God give repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

The gospel likewise reveals to us the Holy Spirit of God, as a divine Sanctifier, and a most loving Comforter. To apply to our souls the redemption purchased by Christ is immediately and appropriately his office; the work which was eternally appointed to him, and the execution of which is his delight. It is he who originally arouses us from the sleep of spiritual death; convinces us of our sin and danger; prevents our resting in our vain contrivances for helping ourselves; forms within us, by his regenerating energy, what the scripture calls a clean heart, a right spirit; and leads us into a state of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. At the outset of our Christian course, we are aware that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; that we must be sanctified as well as justified: nor can we be ignorant, in general, that we must derive each of these blessings from the grace of God. We have, too, some genuine desire and purpose to glorify God with our bodies and our spirits which are his. But at this early stage, we know comparatively little of the vastness of the undertaking, and our own insufficiency for its accomplishment. We estimate very inadequately the sinfulness which remains in us; which makes us dull and unsteady in pursuing the narrow path of piety and virtue; yea, makes us prone to forget our God, and to go astray from him. We know but little of the manifold devices of satan; the perils of the World in which we live and have our parts to act; and above all, the deceitfulness of those passions which lurk secretly, subdued but a little, within our own bosoms. We resolve heartily, and think it not an extremely difficult thing, to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow the Lord Jesus: but presently we find

that we have failed in our watchfulness; that we have gotten off our guard, and have stumbled and fallen down in the race set before us. All this is matter of common experience. As surely as we cultivate the habit of attending closely to our condition and progress in the religious life, so surely do we perceive, more clearly and impressively every day, that when we would do good, evil is present with us, and that we have a law in our members warring against the law of our minds.—Not seldom does our faith in the divine promises give way to gloomy doubt and fear, the offspring of our frequent defeats: and in the hour of despondency we are ready to say, as David said concerning himself, when he thought only of the implacable hostility with which Saul pursued his life, we shall now one day fall by the hand of the enemy. But it pleases God compassionately to overrule these mortifying discoveries of our weakness for the advancement of our salvation.—They not only send us afresh to the blood of sprinkling, and make it more dear to us; but they increase our feeling of dependance on the kind agency and protecting care of the Holy Spirit. They admonish us to seek, with a more single eye, and with more importunate supplication, the constant presence and influence of that all-discerning, omnipotent Spirit of grace; who alone can rescue us from the tyranny of our besetting temptations, and bring our arduous conflict with the whole body of sin to a prosperous issue. In answer to the prayer which he himself has prompted, our blessed Comforter revisits us. He cheers our drooping spirits, encourages us to renew the struggle with renovated vigor; and by his unmatched strength leads us onward from conquest to conquest over the various antagonists whose aim is our destruction. Thus we learn experimentally the deep import of that seeming paradox of St. Paul, when I am weak, then am I strong: when we know, and confess, and bewail our utter debility, then do

we obtain that celestial power which overcomes the hosts of hell, and the still more formidable host of domestic, homeborn traitors, our own irregular appetites and passions. In this way we are instructed to walk; and upon these principles we press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Brethren, were we deprived of the consolatory doctrine of a Sanctifier truly divine, what would be our resource for the cleansing of our nature from moral defilement, and the restoration of the likeness of a holy God to our souls? Would it be human argument and eloquence? Their impotency for this end has been abundantly demonstrated in all ages of the world. Would it be our own will? Alas, it is the captive of sin, the obsequious servant of iniquity, until it receives from heaven a better direction. No; we should find that we must either madly unlearn, if that were possible, the very nature of holiness, or exchange the attempt to acquire it for absolute despair.— But we will not, we cannot turn away from the lovely doctrines of the gospel. We are assured of their truth, we know their inestimable value: and we use them as the manna of heaven, the effectual nourishment of our souls; by which we live unto God now, and hope to live with him when the sun, and the moon, and the stars, shall shine in the firmament no more.

In conclusion, I pray that so far as the truth of God has been at this time delivered, he may impress it upon our minds, and prosper it to our edification. And now to the one Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all glory ascribed for ever and ever. AMEN.