

THE CHRISTIAN TRINITY

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD, THE FATHER; JESUS CHRIST; AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A DISCOURSE PREACHED AT HARVARD CHURCH, CHARLESTOWN,
FEBRUARY 5, 1860.
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DISCOURSE.

Eph. 2. 18: "FOR THROUGH HIM [CHRIST] WE BOTH [JEWS AND GENTILES] HAVE ACCESS BY ONE SPIRIT UNTO THE FATHER."

GOD the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, are brought together in this sentence. I have selected this text for a doctrinal sermon, — a sermon in which I would make every effort in my power, thoughtfully and conscientiously, to distinguish between true and false doctrine; or rather, I should say, between what is true and what is false concerning a great Christian doctrine. That doctrine is known to us under the term " the Trinity;" a symbolic term, which has been so burdened by statements, definitions, and explanations, as to have lost, if it ever had, a distinct and positive meaning. While denying and opposing an element of error in what I understand to be the popular and prevailing doctrine of which that

term is made to be the symbol, I am infinitely more concerned with the truth, the serious and most momentous and most precious truth, which I believe to underlie the faith connected with the doctrine. I have no objection to the term, " the Trinity: " on the contrary, as will appear, I hope, before I close, I recognize in it an idea, a fact, vital to the Christian system. The Trinity, as applied to the system of the Gospel, and as indicating in and through that Gospel a threefold working of God, expresses to my mind true doctrine; but the Trinity as used to state an imaginary complication in the mode of the divine existence, and as distributing the Godhead into three persons, is, to my mind, the symbol of mere human speculation, vain and erroneous. Whether the term " Trinity," in any sense that we can attach to it, is essential to the expression of any great doctrinal truth conveyed to us by the Gospel, is a question of such large and various bearings, that, if it were discussed at this place in my discourse, it would prejudice or confuse the line of thought and argument which I wish to follow. I am content at present with affirming or accepting the position, that the term " Trinity " — either because the elements of Christian doctrine furnish a warrant for its use as a term, a definition, comprehending some Gospel truth; or because of the adventitious interest which the term has acquired as a symbol of doctrine — is a convenient and available one in a discussion concerning some great Christian verities.

NOTE. — The reader need hardly be informed that this discourse was greatly condensed in its delivery. It is now enlarged by a more full exhibition of its leading points, and by the Scripture quotations, which were only referred to in a summary way.

It would seem as if the course of thought and discussion for fifteen hundred years must have satisfied all candid persons, bearing the Christian name, that there is a vitality in the ideas or the faith of which the doctrine of the Trinity is the more or less happily chosen and adequate expression. Only an amazing self-conceit, or an individual self-assertion amounting to arrogance, could resolve all the interest which now goes with that doctrine into superstition or falsehood. The doctrine may risk the statement of an error, or it may fail to state the truth on which it really fastens a firm hold. It may pass from the range of the intelligible and the essential to the sphere of the unintelligible and the visionary. But that it has hold of a truth, and has always been the means of conveying infinitely more truth essential to the Christian system than it has conveyed of error, is a fact which I could not deny, without calling in question the providential oversight of God over the Church of Christ. Is it not the fair inference of our judgment and confidence, that, taking the broadest possible view of the doctrine of the Trinity, it probably contains some essential truth of transcendent interest and importance, though it may be cast out of just relations, and not happily defined in the creeds of Christians?

During the last fifteen hundred years, a proportion of at least nine-tenths of the nominal and actual disciples of Christ have accepted and cherished, as a vital and fundamental Christian doctrine, a tenet of belief expressed by the doctrine of the Trinity. I shall by and by attempt some definite statement of the essential meaning of this term, and a definition of the contents of the Trinity; while I shall refer also to the infinite variety of conceptions and statements under which it has been held. At present, I am concerned to do justice to the fact, that a majority, as large as I have numbered it, has held, in some shape or form, a Christian doctrine of the Trinity. And this majority has embraced its full proportionate share of each class of professed and nominal Christians; of the masses; of the simple, the unlearned, and the confiding, who receive what they are taught, without inquiry or discussion; and of the learned, the inquisitive, and the independent thinkers, who have exercised all their utmost individual power of thought and scholarship and devotion in connection with this doctrine. About one-tenth of those numbered in the Christian fold may be taken as a fair estimate of the relative proportion of those who have silently or avowedly dissented from all the popular conceptions and assertions of the doctrine of the Trinity. As these have understood the doctrine through the statements of its advocates, they have rejected it, sometimes with a most earnest opposition,

as an unscriptural, irrational, absurd, and mischievous speculation. And, further, as an expression of individual opinion, I would avow my own mature conviction, that this proportion of nine-tenths and of one-tenth, as defining the number of those who have received and of those who have rejected the doctrine, is also a fair measurement of the relation between what is true and what is false in all the ideas, convictions, scriptural arguments, Christian testimonies, and practical bearings, identified more or less closely with the doctrine of the Trinity.

In my first thought and study upon this subject, I found the doctrine of the Trinity stated in creeds and church formularies in such a set, dogmatic way, so confounding the rules of grammar, syntax, and arithmetic, which I had been learning, that I stood amazed at the introduction of such intricate and apparently unmeaning matter into the system of the Christian religion. I have since learned better; or, rather, I have learned to put a broader and a more discerning and indulgent interpretation upon what Trinitarians mean by the doctrine: for I have discovered that what they mean is by no fair construction of terms what they assert. Intercourse with minds of various workings—with some between whom and myself, as regards our creeds, it seemed as if there was nothing but painful difference — has satisfied me that we are really most in harmony just on the very points at which we seem most discordant. I found the assertion, that in the Unity of the Godhead there are three Persons, to be either false or unintelligible; but I have learned, that, in that sentence, the word "persons" does not mean what it means in all the other occasions on which we use it in speaking and in writing. My next thought was, if common and very plain words have their meanings wholly changed when used in doctrinal discussions, then a doctrine, which is false when stated under an accepted meaning of a word, may be perfectly true or approximately true when stated under some arbitrary or peculiar meaning of that word. The word "man" may stand for a woman, if we will all agree to use the word "man" for that purpose, in a sense quite different from that in which we use it on all other occasions. So it may be true, that three Divine Persons make but one Divine Being, if these three persons are not three distinct individuals, but are only three aspects or manifestations of one Being. And there is a great deal to be said about the right and the absolute necessity of using words of fixed meaning, in variable and peculiar senses, in some complicated and important discussions about truth, divine and human. Words are not to be our masters, but our servants. They must not chain our thoughts, but should yield to the play and range of our thoughts. Many of the sharpest controversies and strife in religion, politics, and law, have centered upon different meanings attached to words. In order to express the exact truth attained or the sound opinion to be received upon some subjects that have long been debated in the old forms of speech, we want many new words; for we shall never come to a full understanding or agreement with each other while we use our old terms. So long as we employ these, we shall keep alive the old disputes and misunderstandings associated with them. We need some words which mean about half as much, and others which mean a great deal more than those which have long been used in common speech and defined in dictionaries. When St. Paul spoke of "the foolishness of preaching," he did not mean "foolish preaching" nor "the preaching of fools;" for that ordinance was to him the loftiest of all the exercises of speech for ends of wisdom and piety on the sublimes themes; an ordinance in which angels might exercise their noblest gifts. But the term "foolishness," as he then used it, signified simply the seeming inefficiency and poverty of the mouth-work of preaching to secure the end at which it aimed.

Now, all the statements in words of the doctrine of the Trinity are to be regarded as the efforts, or the results of the efforts, of the human mind to express or to define an opinion or belief as to the way in which God is revealed to us in the Christian religion. I find that the most wise and earnest believers of the doctrine of the Trinity all agree in this very striking confession, — that every form of language in which they try to state the doctrine is an inadequate and unsatisfactory expression of the view which they hold, and of the actual doctrine which they understand the Scriptures to reveal. Language, they say, does not, for this purpose, serve their use. The words which they are compelled to employ mean either too much or too little. Their minds seize hold of conceptions or facts which they are incompetent to announce so as to convey the whole of a right impression, and nothing of a wrong impression. They plead that Scripture itself, when its scattered and fragmentary elements of doctrine are gathered up and set together, is abundantly distinct and emphatic in implying this doctrine, while it does not furnish any single sentence ready shaped for announcing it.

I am by no means intending to convey the impression, that I am at all reconciled to the doctrine of the Trinity, so far as it involves a speculative theory about the internal essence, or mode of existence, of the Godhead, by any elasticity of meaning to be found in the word "persons," when used to designate a Triad in the Divine Unity. On the contrary, from first to last in this discourse, I wish to emphasize my dissent from every actual and every conceivable form of the doctrine of the Trinity which carries with it a theory or a guess about the interior constitution of the Godhead. I have referred to the play of thought and fancy with that word "persons," in this connection, only to avail myself of the confession of Trinitarians themselves, that, when they say there is a Trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead, they do not mean what they say, but something else. Certainly the interest here grows upon us to learn what they do mean. We will not contend till we are informed just where and how we are at variance.

Again: a further admission is now made by the intelligent and devout believers of this doctrine. They admit that it stands alone among all the great Gospel doctrines, as not allowing of any exposition or illustration by any analogy from nature or providence or the fields of speculation. Attempts used to be made to find such analogies for the doctrine of the Trinity: as, for instance, in the three angles of a triangle; in the three influences of light, color, and heat, incorporated in the sun; and in the threefold dimensions of geometric figure. But such attempted analogical illustrations of the Trinity in Unity are now pronounced fanciful and useless. All efforts to cast the doctrine into a logical formula are pronounced inadequate and unsatisfactory. In asserting the doctrine, its advocates say, "There are

three Persons in the Unity of the Godhead; " and they immediately add, " But mind, the word persons' does not mean what we mean by it when we use it on all other occasions."

Now, if we have got to find a new meaning for the word " person " in stating the doctrine of the Trinity, it is very evident that the mere word does not involve the truth of the doctrine. The idea which underlies the doctrine is the proper subject of our search and study. Therefore let us utter a word now in the interest of true magnanimity, which, in this case, is the interest of Christian candor or charity. For fifteen hundred years, this high theme has been under debate among Christians. From the first period, between the close of the third and the beginning of the fourth century of the Christian Church, when the elements from which the doctrine of the Trinity was afterwards constructed were the themes of discussion, a passionate strife, always agitating, sometimes even bloody, has been connected with a long-continued controversy about the doctrine. There has hardly been a truce in that transmitted strife. If at one crisis, whether through the agency of a debate or through an imperial edict or a pitched battle, the issue had seemingly been brought to a decision on the Trinitarian or the Unitarian side, the strife was soon again re-opened. The speculative roving of theologians have revolved around the doctrine. Parties have been formed with sole reference to the single point with which the doctrine deals. In vain has it been pronounced a strife of mere words or about barren mysticisms. It has been continually presenting itself, to individual minds at least, as the freshest of all themes, and the most vital and pregnant, too, in all its relations. Every newly discovered biblical manuscript, every recovered relic of the primitive church, every improved lexicon or grammar of the Greek language, is first of all tested by its bearings upon the doctrine of the Trinity. These facts are to be accounted for in a way that shall respect the most serious exercises of which the human mind and heart are capable, and which shall have regard to the providential oversight of the Gospel.

There are indications now, for the first time, of at least a more profitable and edifying way of treating all differences, if not also of relieving and removing such differences on that doctrine. One great point yielded by Trinitarians is in the admission, that they cannot state the doctrine in any terms of language which will correctly and adequately convey their own meaning. This concession, wisely used, should lead the way to peace or harmony; or, at least, to a better understanding, the want of which has always been a large lack between the parties in the controversy. In the meanwhile, Antitrinitarians, while they may still insist, as they have always insisted, that the doctrine of the Trinity, so far as it asserts a triplicate organic distribution of persons in the Godhead, is a most unscriptural doctrine, merely speculative and fanciful, may profitably study with new zeal that evident fact of Gospel revelation which does distribute the whole working force and efficiency of the Gospel truth and power under three divine methods, or agencies, assigned respectively to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That Trinity in Unity is in the Gospel. It is the Gospel. And, from my heart, I do believe that there is wrapped up in that truth the substance of what is and has been really sought and held in the doctrine of the Trinity. There are two quite distinct and very comprehensive grounds on which the prevailing interpretation of the Christian religion insists so strenuously upon some doctrinal truth which is stated, or intended or supposed to be contained, in a doctrine of the Trinity.

1. Something answering to that doctrine is thought to be necessary in order that fair justice be done to what is conceived to be the characteristic peculiarity of the New-Testament Scriptures, in their marked and re-iterated use of three names, attached respectively to three divine agencies, methods, manifestations, or operations, of God, as effecting the whole work of the Gospel. God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are the titles of three co-operating agencies, joint forces which combine in that Gospel work. Each of these is recognized in a distinct sphere of action, fulfilling an assigned portion of the whole scheme, and combining harmoniously to complete the purpose in view. Every class of Scripture readers, from the most scholarly down to those who spell each word of two syllables as they read, have before them this emphatic and distinctive use of the names of the three co-working Gospel agents, or agencies. Some doctrine of a Trinity is thought necessary or natural, at least, for the consistent harmonizing of these scriptural materials. Who will care to dispute this fact? What candid reader does not discern in it the facility of the means by which a doctrine of Trinity in Unity may be developed? And who does not discern the readiness with which an obvious inference from the Scripture representation of the way in which God works in the Gospel, may be turned into a wholly unauthorized but still a venturesome conception about the way in which God himself exists. Still it is plain, that no challenging or denial of the whole popular faith, which goes with or is sheltered under the doctrine of the Trinity, will be of any avail if it fails to meet the exact state of mind with which the mass of Scripture readers assure themselves that " three somethings " divide in doing and unite in completing the work of the Gospel. Nor will any doctrine, better in all respects than that of the Trinity, ever find a popular acceptance, except through some clear and adequate development of the contents of the New Testament, as they distribute the work of the Gospel among three agents, or agencies.

2. The second ground on which the prevailing view expressed by the doctrine of the Trinity has established itself is, as it affords a starting-point for the development of a system of Christian doctrines. The doctrine is made to serve the purpose of a great trunk-truth, from which, first the larger branches, and then the smaller outshoots, of Gospel teaching, may radiate. But here the constructive ingenuity of men is put to service, and allowed its free exercise. Here, too, come in all the risks, all the uncertainties, all the misleading tendencies, of speculation, fancy, and theorizing, upon themes which transcend the scope of the human faculties. It was through this channel of speculation, and not through the reading of the New Testament, that the common doctrine of the Trinity came into the church. Now, we must be very watchful, in all our dealings with this doctrine of the Trinity, to distinguish broadly between the two very different grounds on which it finds support. The scriptural statements to which it seeks to do justice are the sole authorities for us. The fair construction and interpretation of these is a matter of paramount interest with us. The straits to which men may be driven in their speculations as they attempt to develop a doctrinal system, and the fancies or theories which they may agree to accept, are

subjects of quite another sort of interest to us, and wholly destitute of authority for us. In simply dealing with the scriptural references to the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the chief question is a matter about the right exposition of texts. In the development of a doctrinal system, an additional element intermingles; and human fancies supply either the warp or the woof of the fabric. The careful student of the course of discussion and controversy on this doctrine will note two quite different processes used in arguing for it. One process picks out sentences or half-sentences through all the books of Scripture, and works them into a perfect mosaic of fragments, in order that the composite result may exhibit a Trinity of personalities in the Unity of the Godhead. The other process deals with the doctrine of the Trinity, not so much as finding a statement in the text of the Scriptures, but as inwrought into the scheme and method of redemption by the Gospel. The Christian system, it is affirmed, is built upon the disclosure of a partition of divine instrumentalities between three personalities in the Godhead. In this point of view, the doctrine of the Trinity is made to be the very arcana, the interior secret, of revelation. The relation of the doctrine to the organic development and to the working plan of the Gospel is strongly insisted upon. Some of the most earnest modern defenders of the doctrine plead for it, not so much through the stress of evidence offered for it in the literal statements of Scripture, as for the sake of the inferential uses and the doctrinal corollaries to be drawn from it. It is adopted as a central truth, that it may serve as a starting-point for the development of a system. Its affiliated doctrines are made to be dependent upon it. It becomes the sap-root of the Christian vine. In this case, the usual method of deducing the doctrinal teaching of the Scriptures is completely inverted. The doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead is pressed upon faith, not because it presents itself obviously and distinctly upon the very surface-teaching of the Scriptures, but because a system of doctrines has been elaborated by the constructive ingenuity of men, which requires this doctrine as the main trunk of its organism. And, when all the vital truths and all the effective methods of the Christian system are thus referred back to this one doctrine, it acquires, of course, an immense amount of adventitious, traditional, and devotional influence. It gets incorporated in the faith, and enshrined in the religious affections, of Christians. It is represented as the central truth of the Gospel, the main pillar of a standing or a falling church. Any single doctrine or tenet, which is thus emphasized and exalted into chief importance, will become the symbol of a very deep interest and affection for the disciples of the system to which it belongs. A trellis, designed to support a growing vine, will decay while it is serving its true office; and then it will come about that the vine will support the trellis. Many of the views, convictions, and feelings, which Christians have attached to the substance of their Gospel faith, have passed through this transition, — from being the helps or methods of their faith to being burdens upon it.

It is often alleged as a valid reason for receiving the doctrine of the Trinity in its ecclesiastical or speculative form, — that which asserts an actual triplicity of persons in the Godhead, — that the church, the fold of Christ, the vast multitude of believers in every age, with the overwhelming force of a majority, and with the intense assurance of ardent conviction and heart piety, have accepted that form of the doctrine. The dissentients from it, the opponents of it, however estimable, however earnest, have been but a scanty minority; and their arguments and avowals have always been overborne by the throngs of its champions. In the great folios of the church's histories, the names and the pleas of the Antitrinitarians are said to occupy only here and there a page or a paragraph, devoted to the mere ripples of heresy against the rolling tide of orthodoxy. Antitrinitarians, it is alleged, has always been an unpopular creed, connected with alienation, bitterness, decline of evangelic faith. Its chief advocates have been isolated individuals, eccentric, rationalistic, speculative men, led by prejudice or puffed with conceit. The fellow the doctrinal corollaries to be drawn from it. It is adopted as a central truth, that it may serve as a starting-point for the development of a system. Its affiliated doctrines are made to be dependent upon it. It becomes the sap-root of the Christian vine. In this case, the usual method of deducing the doctrinal teaching of the Scriptures is completely inverted. The doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead is pressed upon faith, not because it presents itself obviously and distinctly upon the very surface-teaching of the Scriptures, but because a system of doctrines has been elaborated by the constructive ingenuity of men, which requires this doctrine as the main trunk of its organism. And, when all the vital truths and all the effective methods of the Christian system are thus referred back to this one doctrine, it acquires, of course, an immense amount of adventitious, traditional, and devotional influence. It gets incorporated in the faith, and enshrined in the religious affections, of Christians. It is represented as the central truth of the Gospel, the main pillar of a standing or a falling church. Any single doctrine or tenet, which is thus emphasized and exalted into chief importance, will become the symbol of a very deep interest and affection for the disciples of the system to which it belongs. A trellis, designed to support a growing vine, will decay while it is serving its true office; and then it will come about that the vine will support the trellis. Many of the views, convictions, and feelings, which Christians have attached to the substance of their Gospel faith, have passed through this transition, — from being the helps or methods of their faith to being burdens upon it.

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permeates each true branch of the vine; and Antitrinitarians, however kindly regarded or estimated on other grounds, have, in their religious relations, been always warned off by ecclesiastical cordons from intercourse on equal terms with the faithful.

Thus, it is affirmed, stands the case, as it has always stood, between Trinitarians and Antitrinitarians. The vast masses, the mighty companies and communions, alike Roman and Protestant, in the Church of Christ, have been Trinitarians: the feeble, distrusted, and excommunicated minority have been Unitarians. More than this, too, is affirmed. Trinitarianism is said to be the stock-root, the vital center, the great conduit of truth, for the whole system of Christian doctrine. From that central starting-point all the contents and materials of our faith are developed, and made to live and yield their holy impulses of power and piety. The Trinity is the heart of the Christian doctrine, as the truth about God is the basis for truth about all the things of God, especially about his revelations. Every attempt to lead out the great evangelical tenets into a system of doctrine requires a central truth from which all others may radiate. That central truth must be of such a divine and transcendent compass as to serve that commanding use. And such a truth, it is triumphantly urged, is found in the doctrine of the Trinity.

I believe I have done justice to all the intended argument in the oft-repeated assertion of the overbearing and triumphant acceptance and prevalence of the Trinitarian doctrine. There is argument in the assertion. It may, however, be fairly challenged, and diminished of its apparent force; and all candid reasoners must admit that there are just and weighty considerations which reduce its terms so sensibly as really to impair its cogency. I might, for this purpose, urge the familiar pleas, that the truth is not always found with majorities, and that opinions are not to be counted, but weighed. I might call up some of the fancies and superstitions and prejudices which have found an almost universal acceptance with mankind. And then I might proceed to examine this bulk of testimony for Trinitarianism, and ask what proportion of the witnesses for it, in the great promiscuous and heterogeneous companies of men and women composing what is called "the church," have really made any intelligent study, and reached any individual results of thought or belief, on this subject; and what proportion have trusted implicitly to the teachings of others, merely yielding, acquiescing, and professing, as common soldiers march, led by those whom they are willing, or whom they feel bound, to obey.

But I waive all these possible pleas, perfectly reasonable, and carrying with them great force of argument, as all must admit. I waive them simply for the sake of concentrating all the emphasis of an answer to the claim of majority and popularity and prevalence for Trinitarianism on this frank and sufficient reply; viz., that this doctrine of the Trinity has been held under such a wide and inconsistent variety of conceptions and definitions as to destroy all identity in the doctrine itself. That assertion is tenable against all impugners, and the cogency of it is of immense avail for Antitrinitarians. The plea of prevalence and supremacy for the church doctrine of the Trinity must be made to rest upon some positive statement of the doctrine in intelligible terms, just as all pleas at law, all claims, all prerogatives, all constitutional enactments, all scientific theories, are held to the utmost possible definiteness in the assertion of them. But the doctrine of the Trinity, through all the ages and in all the communions through which it is traced, and in the advocacy of its champions, who have written in behalf of thousands in their respective fellowships, has been stated and expounded in such an infinite multitude of ways, vague, unintelligible, confounding or sharp, dogmatic or inconsistent, that no common element, no identical idea, appears always and everywhere in these statements.

I might more than fill my pages with a series of quotations from Trinitarian advocates, as they have stated and defined the doctrine; and to each of these definitions or statements would be added the confessions or regrets of the writers, that they had not expressed what is really in their minds, or done justice to the truth which they wished to set forth. They have had to state it as best they were able; and they will urge, that they could not be more explicit, without being less intelligible. The harder they try, the more poorly do they succeed; as Calvin uses the word "persons" in defining the Trinity, and then regrets that he is compelled to use a word which fails to convey his right meaning, and does convey a wrong meaning. And then these same avowers and champions of the church doctrine of the Trinity, baffled or perplexed in their efforts to state it in adequate and intelligible terms, sometimes proceed to give us the reasons why they are so embarrassed and confounded in trying to state a cardinal Christian doctrine in their mother speech, or even in one of the learned but dead tongues of men. Some of them complain of the imperfection and the limitations of language; of the fetters which words impose upon ideas; of the difficulty of transferring to another mind, in the forms of speech, the exact sentiment, or form of a thought, held in their own minds. Others account for their inability to make a satisfactory statement of the doctrine of the Trinity by reminding us of the ineffable mystery which invests the mode of the Divine Existence, and which revelation penetrates only to allow faith a distant gaze, without allowing the tongue to describe its vision.

Now, these various ways of conceiving and defining the doctrine of the Trinity, followed by the frank and emphatic confession of their inadequacy as statements of it, do certainly qualify and reduce the force of the argument drawn from the acceptance of the doctrine by the church universal. For when we ask, "What is the doctrine which has been accepted and believed by the immense majority of Christians?" we are utterly confounded by the forms and phases and shapes in which the doctrine is set forth. If we try to find in them all some common features and elements, we only get back to the barest and vaguest statement in words or phrases, which was the very statement sought to be made intelligible by fuller definition; the definition, meanwhile, having proved a failure. When any one, now-a-days, assails the doctrine of the Trinity, he has to give solid form to a vague outline in order that he may aim his blows; and, even then, not one in a score of them is allowed to have hit the phantom shape as it expands, contracts, and vanishes.

Neander, the most competent and the most candid and reliable historian of the Christian Church, has brought all his learning, vigor of

mind, and acuteness of thought, to bear upon the course by which doctrines and dogmas were developed gradually, through controversies, discussions, and heresies, from the original staple material of the New Testament, the traditions of the apostolical age, and the contributions of human brains. There are two works of Neander in which a student may pursue the method of this development of opinions: one, the " History of the Christian Church; " the other, " the History of Christian Dogmas." For any but professional or very intelligent and scholarly readers, the works are infinitely perplexing; in parts, actually unintelligible; so abstruse and bewildering are the mazes through which they lead. Neander, however, draws a very lucid distinction between what he calls the practical and the speculative doctrine of the Trinity. By the practical doctrine of the Trinity, he means something wholly unobjectionable to a Unitarian, — something too, which, as I shall attempt soon to show, is the real and essential Trinitarianism of the Gospel scheme. By the speculative doctrine of the Trinity, — which it is doubtful whether the historian himself accepted, as he expressly denies it to be the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, — he means the mere dogma which was the fruit of human brain-work.

I shall attempt, before I close, to indicate the process, as traceable in the pages of Neander's elaborate and thorough works, by which the ingenious metaphysics of a human philosophy wrought out the fancy, that the one God, in his own interior essence and substance, comprehends three personalities, each of which is also God. At present, keeping in view the positive and not the negative object of my discourse, I would deal at some length with those abundant materials furnished in the New Testament for distinguishing and defining the three divine agencies, or methods, which planned and wrought, and now advance, the work of the Gospel. We must do justice to those verbal statements, to that mode of representation, to that method of instruction, characteristic of the New-Testament writings, which, however far short they fall of asserting a triad of persons in the one God, and, indeed, however irreconcilable they are with that theosophic mystification of human brains, give us three names, which answer to and represent respectively three manifestations or directions of one divine force. We shall best vacate the usurped and always distracting authority claimed by a metaphysical figment — in the most presumptuous venture which it ever dared in parceling out the essence of the Godhead — by following the lucid method of Scripture as it parts the work of the Gospel on earth, not the Being of the Godhead in heaven, into offices assigned to God the Father, to Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit.

In view of the historical and practical interest for Christians attaching directly or indirectly to the doctrine of the Trinity, it may be expected of every intelligent and serious person once to read over carefully and systematically the whole New Testament, with sole reference to this doctrine. Take a period in your life, when your mind is most clear and calm and strong, and pursue the question with such light as Providence and opportunity shall afford you. It will be a most rewarding process. All will learn much by it. It is one way, the chiefs way, for reaching individual satisfaction and conviction, where thousands around us are at variance, or are believing and pleading unintelligently to each other and to many of their fellow-men. Consider that, within the small compass of the New Testament, — a book which many persons have read through in a single day, — you have all the material for opinion and authority on this subject. Give over all thought or care for fathers of the church or councils: for, in this case, you may justly follow the spirit of the well-known reason alleged by the Mahometan caliph in burning the great library at Alexandria; viz., that, if the books in it did not agree with the " Koran," they ought to be burned; and, if they did agree, there was no need of them. If the church fathers and councils followed the New Testament, we have equal access to their original authority: if they vary from it, we have nothing to do with them, nor they with us. From that date in the history of the Christian Church at which there began to be other writings than the New Testament read by Christians to help them to form opinions about Christian doctrines, there began also the same intricate, confused, and discordant method of asserting, disputing, and controverting, which has steadily increased with the increase of the material for it in books. If Christian teachers, now-a-days, could rid their minds of all that they have learned about the doctrine of the Trinity from all other sources than the New Testament, Christendom might start fair in a new and unprejudiced attempt to develop the contents of the Gospel on the points thought to bear upon this doctrine. And now the mountain heaps of books, and the infinite variety of opinions, and of phases of opinion, about religious doctrines, make it perfectly refreshing to turn back to the original staple material of all this human manufacture of dogmas in the New Testament. The common culture diffused among us, in connection with the acuteness of mind which will generally accompany a serious personal interest in such inquiries, will qualify our lay-people as well as our theologians to pursue the study of any great doctrinal question through the New Testament. Let the search be broad and deep, following on a good position chosen for a starting-point. After we have read the Bible by rote or habit, as we have been taught to do, and after we have received the sort of religious education attained through listening to preaching, or marking the current opinions around us, the desire is naturally prompted at sometime within us to study the substance of the Gospel for ourselves. We try to draw forth, or to arrange systematically, according to their organic relations, the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. We must have a starting-point; we must make or find a beginning. The less of our own art or ingenuity that is engaged in the work, the better. A prejudiced start is but a forestalled conclusion. We cannot wholly dispense with our own constructive skill. The simple fact, that we are not satisfied with the unsystematic method of Scripture, but regard its miscellaneous and desultory contents only as materials which we intend to work over, implies that we have a set purpose of assorting or classifying what we call its texts. The great risk in doing this always is, lest we should carry into the Scriptures a system or theory of our own. The risk is inevitable: it admits only of being held in check, and of being subjected to correction, by a frequent review and reconsideration of our system.

The starting-point for a systematic development of the lessons which we draw from the faithful study of the New Testament may be thus defined. The Christian religion brings God into additional, into new, relations with men. We know God, independently of the New Testament, simply as our Creator, and as the sovereign Disposer of our lot. The new Christian ideas which are attached to him

are the ideas of redemption, of adoption, and of a communion opened for us with God. These are original and sublime ideas, expressive of august and precious truths. The development of them exhausts the substance of Gospel teaching, and fills the whole range of a complete Christian experience. We are by nature the creatures of God; by revelation through Christ, we are made the children of God, — are adopted by him; and, by an agency called the Spirit, we are made the sensible subjects of God's direct influence within our spirits.

I have intentionally stated this great truth of what is original and additional in the Christian religion, as respects our relation in it to God, in the simplest forms of speech. I may have stated it too coldly, without the glow and fervor and intensity of language which may be proper for the utterance of so precious and so comforting a doctrine. The theme invites us to use the most earnest and ardent outbursts of kindled feeling. But, at present, let us be content with a calm and chastened dealing with it. That method will be the best for impressing the simple but lofty truth to be taken into our minds; which is this, — that the Christian religion brings its disciples into very endearing and very intimate relations with that august Being whom we know, outside of the Christian religion, only as our Creator. He adopts us in Christ, renews and endears the tie which binds us to him, and opens a tender and constant intercourse between us. These new relations of God to the disciples of Christ are the vital elements of the Gospel. They are the instruments and agencies of its power. The terms "incarnation" or "manifestation," and "fellowship" or "communion" in the Holy Spirit, are expressions which we have to use as we search our way into the interior essence of the Christian religion. We find them as necessary as is the word "Creator," which we apply to God as the Maker of all things in heaven and on earth. What is new in the Christian religion begins with its original disclosures of some more near and fond relations to his children than natural religion ever disclosed or can now verify to human beings. In the development of Christian doctrine on these, its original materials for piety and faith, the terms the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are made the symbols, the emphatic words, constantly recurring, used with remarkable significance, and with a most lucid meaning.

Now, the point of absorbing interest for us is to learn what is the substance and the meaning of this Christian teaching about God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Wrapped up in the true Christian doctrine on this high subject lies the whole working force, the original and constant and essential vitality, of the Gospel. I have said that nine-tenths of all the professed disciples of Christ have accepted some doctrine of the Trinity, as expressing substantially the Christian doctrine on this subject; and I have avowed my belief or admission, that nine-tenths also of what that doctrine of the Trinity means to those who hold it, and of what they intend to believe and assert in it, is the truth. Substantially, then, I might profess to receive a doctrine of the Trinity. Certainly I am more concerned to insist upon the real truth involved in it, than to protest against what I conceive to be the portion of error in it, if, in so doing, I run the risk of seeming to deny its substantial truth. By and by, I shall try to give expression to what I regard as that substantial truth. Now I would intimate what I conceive to be the unscriptural, the heretical, and the erroneous element in it. I object to that doctrine as commonly expounded, when it asserts that there is a triple division in the Godhead; when it divides God into a threefold personality, and distributes the essence of Deity — its organic Unity — into a triad of persons known under three titles. I do not believe, for I do not find revealed, a Trinity of persons in the Godhead. I do believe in a threefold manifestation or operation of God. I can distinguish three divine methods, and can distribute into three specific and appropriate agencies, the divine workings engaged in the Christian religion. It pre-seats to me the one God as Creator, Father, Origin, Governor, of all things, the sovereign Administrator of the universe; and then as incarnate in Jesus Christ, the express image of God, in a life manifested, set forth, in a living and teaching witness of the Divine; and then, finally, the Gospel discloses to me, under the title of the Holy Ghost, such a kind and compass of special divine agencies, working through such a method, as to make it necessary to have a definite name or title for them. I find no partition of the essence of the Godhead, no organic division of the one personality of the Deity, no triplicity of existence, involved in this distribution of divine forces and agencies in the Gospel. Up to the point in which Trinitarians begin to speculate about the mode in which God actually exists, I can follow them. I think I can discern the exact point at which they leave the practical and revealed doctrine on this subject for the speculative and the dreamy fancies of their own brains; and I think I can understand how and why Trinitarians are induced to transfer conceptions drawn from the way in which God is revealed as distributing his divine agency in the Gospel into three channels, to conceptions about the way in which he himself may exist.

To give expression to all these relations, the new and the old, the natural and the revealed, in which disciples taught by Jesus Christ are represented as standing towards God, the New-Testament Scriptures state and emphasize and use, with ever-varying richness and abundance of illustration, terms recognizing three methods or directions of divine agency and influence. These three methods answer to, or are represented respectively by, the names of God, the Father; Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit. The reiteration and the emphatic use of these terms, singly or in conjunction, give a very peculiar character to the New-Testament Scriptures, drawing a very marked distinction between them and the Old-Testament Scriptures. The four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles, are all characterized by this emphatic distribution of the efficient forces of Christianity among divine agencies, of which the three names are the symbols. But, as it is in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles that we have the most specific and definite details of the methods by which the Christian religion was planted in different communities, it would be natural for us to expect, as indeed we find, that this distribution of divine forces is more directly presented to our notice in them than it is in the Gospels. These phenomena of the New-Testament Scriptures are worthy of very careful study on their own account. They must be thoroughly apprehended in all their textual relations by anyone who would do justice to the particular mode, the precise form, in which Christian truth is there presented to us. It is my own sincere conviction — formed, I humbly trust, after a serious, a faithful, and a patient examination of all the grounds and materials for an intelligent opinion — that this method in which Christian truth is presented to us in the New Testament,

furnishes the elements which are erroneously wrought together and most strangely perverted into a theological fiction, in the common doctrine of the Trinity. We are to do justice to that method of Christian teaching. We are to understand why it is that the agencies of faith and power, by which the Gospel of Christ was planted in the world, are distributed respectively under three names, or titles. The right view on this subject may disclose to us how the wrong view originated; where the transition-point from truth to error is to be discerned; and how the error will be made to yield to a better apprehension of the truth, clearly apprehended and loyally maintained.

I will therefore venture to indicate, for others to try if they see fit, the process which I have pursued at length in order to attain an intelligent and unbiased opinion derived from the first and the only authoritative sources on this whole subject. Sit down in the most quiet place of your own retired hours, furnished with the New Testament, with pen and ink, and with three large sheets and one half-sheet of fair paper. Open the book with the Acts of the Apostles, and read carefully on, with the most concentrated gaze of your eye and your mind, till you have closed with the Revelation of St. John. As you read, copy on the half-sheet of paper — that space will suffice for them — all the passages which bring together in one grammatical sentence, and which thus refer in connection to God, the Father; Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit. On each of the three sheets transcribe such passages as make mention singly of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit; passages appealing to them respectively, referring to them for faith, for guidance, for counsel, for strength; passages ascribing to them work, offices, glory, gratitude, trust; passages which trace to them the planning, the purposing, the administering, or the accomplishing, anything, any enterprise, or any service, in the interest of truth, of humanity, of revelation, of the Church and Gospel of Christ.

I will venture still to intimate to you some of the results to be attained by that method, such as I myself reached, to be accepted or rejected by you as you shall verify or test them by your own independent search. I found not a single syllable, hint, or assertion, which, from the first to the last, indicated an occult doctrine about the interior essence of the Godhead as distributing its Unity into a Triad of persons, each one of which has all the attributes of an underived and self-possessed Deity, while the three are still mysteriously one, and the one is mysteriously three. Not a single sentence of the records suggests to me such an idea, nor do I know of a single sentence that can be made consistent with it; while the record teaches me much else, very definitely, very emphatically, that gives me a clear doctrine quite wide away from such a speculation. The single sentences which make mention in grammatical connection of God, the Father; Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit, — would seem to be the ones in which we should find at least the nearest approximation to a statement of that doctrine of Tri personality in the Godhead; or, at any rate, the elements of the doctrine should lie in them most facile to such a use, to such a constructive inference from them. But they are, in fact, the least available, the most intractable, for such a use. Every conception, imagination, and idea of that occult doctrine, concerning the mode in which God exists, has to be forced into those passages, and cannot be deduced from them.

After you have copied out all the texts, the sentences, the lines, or the phrases, which make emphatic mention respectively of God, the Father; of Jesus Christ; and of the Holy Spirit, — you will have before you all the materials through which Christendom has to draw forth its doctrine about the offices and the relations expressed by those three names. You will find that all the planning, helping, and accomplishing involved in the whole Gospel work is distributed to the agencies of which those names are the titles. One or another of those titles comes into use in the apostolic teaching, and in the intercourse of Christian disciples, to designate the power invoked, the help relied upon, the method through which hope, strength, or success, reaches the subjects of their joint oversight, instruction, or guidance. There are results of inexpressible interest, convictions of a very precious sort, knowledge and faith applicable to many ends of piety, and all independent of and additional to the merely doctrinal purpose in view, to be reached by this process, which is, of itself, so directly helpful to true doctrine.

Some very remarkable and instructive elements, which will enter into the results reached by the process that has been indicated, may here be mentioned. The number of the texts on each of the three sheets. of paper that are to present respectively the passages in which God, the Father; Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit, or what is synonymous with each of those titles, — are named, referred to, relied upon, and credited, for the offices of planning, helping, and accomplishing, ascribed to each of them, will seem, at first view, about equal. But, if pains be taken to count the passages, it will be found that the distinction of the larger number of references, as well as the other distinctions of eminence and prerogative and supreme authority yet to be mentioned, goes with God, the Father.

A more striking and significant element in the result that will be reached is now to be stated with the emphasis that befits it. In order to present it in its full force, I must be pardoned for introducing it with an illustration by an analogy, which, though it must be admitted to jar with the solemnity of our theme, may yet be employed without irreverence. We are familiar in the concerns of human life, in matters of the most serious interest as well as in those of a merely pecuniary and business character, with arrangements which engage three joint agents, partners, or incorporated parties, in some common object. They may differ in age, in knowledge, in responsibility, in the amounts which they risk, and in the distribution of their profits. They may divide among them the trusts and functions which enter into their partnership. They may be mutually ignorant of each other's methods or details of employment. The whole administrative or executive authority may be vested in one of them, and the other two may be merely subordinates to him. There may be two persons, and the property of a third, without his own personal agency engaged in the partnership. In all such joint interests, undertakings, and relations, —and they admit of an infinite variety in their particulars, — there may be a parting-out, a distribution, of functions covering all the concerns that enter into the common object; and, at every stage and in every element of the scheme which engages them, the work will be most effectively done when each contributes his full share. Now, so far as this not wholly appropriate

illustration will furnish one point for an analogy, we may avail ourselves of it in the case before us. God, the Father; Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit, — are represented in the New Testament as engaged in the work of the Gospel, as contributing each some specific element to that whole work, as uniting in its common object. A selection and arrangement of all the Scripture references to each of those respective titles, will exhibit with an amazing clearness before our eyes and minds a most exact and appropriate distribution of functions and services in that common work among the joint agents in it. Till any one has actually made this disposition of Scripture passages, he will have no idea whatever of the wonderful consistency that characterizes, in this respect, the writings coming to us from the different pens which contributed to the New Testament. Cursory readers may take up the impression, that there is a sort of indiscriminate assignment of the works and offices of the Gospel indifferently to God and Christ and the Spirit; but this is very far from being the truth of the case. There is not the slightest confusion indicated in the use of the three names, or in the offices, functions, and services assigned respectively to what is signified by them. In no single instance is there a trespass by one of them into the range filled and served by appropriation by the other. In no joint partnership in any human enterprise, in no distribution of the functions of government into legislative, judicial, and executive, or into primary and representative authorities, was there ever recognized a more exact, systematic, and consistent partition of rights, duties, and offices, than is observed throughout the New Testament in assigning all the work of the Gospel by portions, respectively, to God the Father, to Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. To each of them belongs a specific and distinct function, range, method, and efficiency. God, the Father, plans, administers, and directs the work; and every element and stage of it which concerns that supereminent function is uniformly assigned to him. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are the subordinates of God: their offices and authority and efficiency are derived from him. They come into the work, at a stage subsequent to its original plan, as agents and instruments in the working of it; and, in all the exalted service which they render, they refer us back to the prime Source of their own functions, and accept the work assigned to them as subordinate service. The merely mechanical labor of my pen, following the search through the New Testament, and aided by the corresponding office of the printing-types, would readily serve to place before the reader an exhaustive display of all the Scripture passages to be parted out by the method before us. That whole exhaustive process is necessary to the complete exhibition of the contents of the New Testament as they bear upon this point. But as, for reasons already given, I would have every earnest inquirer, who is perplexed by the way in which he finds this doctrinal discussion pursued by others, perform the rewarding task of a thorough distribution of texts for himself, I will attempt a distribution of the passages found only in four consecutive documents of the New Testament; viz., the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle to the Romans, and the two Epistles to the Corinthians. Of course, we must make allowance for the risk which we incur of breaking the sense and impairing the full meaning of a passage of which we quote but a fragment. Occasionally, too, we shall be embarrassed, though perhaps, we shall be more frequently enlightened as to the main object we have in view, by the combination, in some sentences, of two of the scriptural elements which we wish to isolate. Still, the partition of offices and functions respectively to God, to Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, is so luminous and so consistent in the method of it through the whole record, that the substantial result of our labor will hardly fail to satisfy us.

To " God, the Father," — " the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," — his Father and our Father, his God and our God, from the beginning to the end of the New-Testament record, with all emphasis, reiteration, and variety of phrase, and with all the force and distinctness of which the simplest forms of language will admit, is referred the sole and entire supremacy in the whole Gospel work. His was the original scheme, his the chosen time and means, his the efficiency, his the wisdom and the power and the love, manifested in the Gospel. In reference to the world which God designed to make and to govern, Christ is said to have " had glory with the Father before the world was." Christ is said also to have been " slain from the foundation of the world." So is it said of the disciples of Christ, that God " had chosen them in him before the foundation of the world." And Christ said, in prayer to God for these disciples, " The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." So far back into undated ages is the Gospel scheme, with its agencies of love, represented as formed in the one Divine Mind. Every stage, in its preparatory processes and in its earthly development, is committed to the sole purpose and oversight of God. And to him, as it advances, the angels of heaven ascribe glory over the nativity of Christ; and to him Christ himself, as well and as dependently as do the disciples of Christ, addresses all his prayers.

It was God who " so loved the world as to send into it his Son." — " It is life eternal to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent." — " All things " in the Gospel " are of God, who is over all, and in all, and through all."

Turn now to those Scriptures through which our gatherings are to be made, and mark the office of God the Father in the Gospel work. Let us bind into one close-set paragraph of sentences, Scripture statements, which may be fragmentary indeed, as so selected, but which shall be honestly chosen for the leading thought and sentiment', and for the one supreme Name which is in them. Trusting to the memory of readers and to the facility of reference, we may omit the notes of chapter and verse.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

While Jesus was with his disciples, after his resurrection, he spoke to them " of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." At Jerusalem, they were to " wait for the promise of the Father," which they had heard from Christ. Christ told them it was not for them " to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power."

" God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ."

" The promise is unto as many as the Lord our God shall call."

" God raised from the dead " him whom the Jews had crucified. God shall again "send Jesus Christ, which before was preached."
" The things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his prophets " included the promise,
" A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you." " Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you."
The disciples " lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God." Herod, Pilate, and the people of Israel, had combined " to do what God's hand and God's counsel had determined before to be done." " God hath given the Holy Ghost to them that obey him." The Gospel is " the word which God sent unto the children of Israel by Jesus Christ."

" The Gentiles also received the word of God." While Peter was in " prison, prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." When the apostles come together for Counsel or fellowship, " they rehearse all that God had done with them," " declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them," and that " known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." The Gentiles, embracing the Gospel, " turned to God." Paul " declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry." In their prison, " at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God." Paul declared to the Athenians the unknown God, whom they ignorantly worshipped, as " the God that made the world, and all things therein; " and as having " appointed a day for the judgment of the world " by Jesus Christ, whom he had "raised from the dead." Paul promises disciples at Ephesus to return to them again, " if God will; " and, fulfilling his promise, " he persuaded them of the things concerning the kingdom of God," and he declared unto them " all the counsel of God." " And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul." " So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed." The doctrine which Paul preached was " repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; " and, in parting from those to whom he had preached, he said, " I commend you to God." It was after Paul had espoused the " heresy " of the Gospel that he still continued to " worship the God of his fathers," to hold fast to his " hope toward God," and to keep " a conscience void of offence toward God." He was judged for his " hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; " and, " having obtained help of God," he continued to testify. At Rome, though a prisoner, " he expounded and testified the kingdom of God " " to the Gentiles, to whom the salvation of God was sent." —

EPISTLE TO ROMANS.

" Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God (which he had promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures), concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

" I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all."

"As God is my witness, whom I serve in the Gospel of his Son."

"The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation."

"Therein is the righteousness of God revealed."

"The day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."

"The righteousness of- God is by faith of Jesus Christ."

"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth."

"We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"God commended his love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

"We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

"We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"The grace of God by one man, Jesus Christ."

"Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father."

"Reckon yourselves to be alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Yield yourselves unto God."

"The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Ye are " heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

"I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"He spared not his own Son."

"Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

"It is God that justified."

"The love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"Thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead."

"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things. To Him be glory forever."

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service."

"There is no power but of God."

"Every tongue shall confess to God; every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

"He that served Christ is acceptable to God."

"Has thou faith? Have it to thyself before God."

“ The God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.”

“ That the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.”

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.”

“ Ministering the Gospel of God.”

“ I may glory, through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God.”

“ I beseech you, that ye strive together with me in prayers to God for me, that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God.”

“Now the God of peace be with you all.”

“ To God, only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, forever.” —

1 CORINTHIANS.

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, unto the Church of God at Corinth: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always, on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.

“ God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son.”

“ The preaching of the cross is the power of God.”

“ God hath chosen the foolish things of the world and the weak things of the world,” etc. I declared “ unto you the testimony of God, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

“ We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.”

“ The things which God hath prepared for them that love him, God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit.”

“ The things that are freely given to us of God.”

“ I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”

“ We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's building.”

“ According to the grace of God which is given unto me,” etc.

“ Ye are the temple of God.”

“ Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.”

“ We are ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

“ God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.”

“ Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”

“ God hath called us to peace.”

“ There is none other God but one.”

“ 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.”

“ Do all to the glory of God.”

“ The head of Christ is God.”

“ Despise ye the Church of God?”

“ God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body.”

“ God hath set some in the church.”

“ He will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.”

“ Let him speak to himself and to God; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

“ I persecuted the Church of God.”

“ We have testified of God, that he raised up Christ.”

“ The end, when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.”

“ When he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under him. Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

“ Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus. Christ.” —

2 CORINTHIANS.

“ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth: Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort,” etc.

“ That we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raised the dead,” etc.

“ By the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.”

“ For all the promises of God in Christ are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now, he which established us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

“ Now, thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ; for we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ.”

"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ."
 "Such trust have we through Christ to Godward."
 "Our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament."
 "Not handling the word of God deceitfully, but commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."
 "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
 "That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."
 "Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus."
 "That the abundant grace might redound to the glory of God."
 "We know that we have a building of God in the heavens."
 "Now, He that hath wrought for us the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."
 "We are made manifest unto God."
 "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God."
 "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."
 "We beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."
 "Approving ourselves as the ministers of God, by the word of truth, by the power of God."
 "Ye are the temple of the living God."
 "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, said? the Lord Almighty."
 "Perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 "God, that comforted those that are cast down, comforted us."
 "That our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you."
 "The grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia."
 "Thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you."
 "For God loveth a cheerful giver; and God is able to make all grace abound toward you."
 "Which causes through us thanksgiving to God."
 "They glorify God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, for the exceeding grace of God in you."
 "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."
 "The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God; casting down everything that exalted itself against the knowledge of God."
 "The measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us."
 "I have preached to you the Gospel of God freely."
 "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knows that I lie not."
 "We speak before God in Christ."
 "Christ yet lives by the power of God."
 "I pray to God that ye do no evil."
 "The God of love and peace shall be with you."

Such is the array of sentences furnished by four of the separate contents of the New Testament, recognizing and defining the agency of God, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father," in the Gospel. He is supreme in the work; he planned it; he provided all the instrumentalities of it; he guided, re-enforced, and sustained the work in all stages of its progress. Not a single sentence which we have read would lead us to conceive of any confusion of the Unity of the Divine personality; not an intimation, as given to the Jewish converts, who had been believers in the strict Unity of God, that henceforward, as Christians, they must conceive of him as a Triad of Persons, or subsistence. To God alone do the apostles look as to the source and inspiration of the whole Gospel scheme. Very much is made, by the champions of Trinitarianism, of a sentence occurring in a letter of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, about the meetings and the worship of the Christians, when the sect was new and strange and persecuted. That functionary had heard, that, in their assemblies, they "sung hymns to Christ as to a God." This is just such a report as we should have expected would have been circulated and caught up about the early Christians by Pagans. If a sentence had been found in the New Testament, telling us, that, when the apostles were in prison, the disciples had prayed to Christ in their behalf, the sentence would certainly have confused us. We do read of the prayers of the church on such an occasion; but they were addressed to God.

The sole and supreme prerogatives assigned to God, in all the sentences we have been reading, must, of course, preclude the assignment of them to any other than God in the same records, if their contents are self-consistent. It remains, therefore, for us to test whether the contents of those records are self-consistent; that is, whether the offices assigned to Jesus Christ and to the Holy Spirit, so far as a specific agency is attributed to each of them, are always distinctly described as subordinate to the agency of the Almighty Father. If Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are but two other titles of the same God of whom we have been reading, that also will appear from the records. If specific and dependent and delegated agencies are represented as committed to them by God, and if they are found to have fulfilled them, the records will be luminous in their consistency.

We turn now to those sentences from the Scripture documents before us, from which we are to deduce' the office and work assigned

emphatically to Jesus Christ in what is called " the Gospel scheme." Many of the sentences which we have been reading, for what they tell us of God, have contained also a reference to the name and work of Christ. Let us clearly understand the object and aim which we have in view. We are not seeking to gather the materials for a theory about the " nature of Christ." It is admitted to be one of the most difficult and baffling of all the tasks essayed by theologians, in their attempts to construct a system of Christian divinity, to work together, digest, and harmonize every sentence, phrase, and scrap of language used concerning Jesus Christ in the New Testament, and from them to elaborate a dogma, a consistent and intelligible theory, about his " nature." Many, who have spent precious hours and tedious though ungrudged toils on that work, have rested in the two conclusions, —that it was no design of the New-Testament writers to give us the full materials of a dogma on that point, and that no practical or devotional end of the Gospel is committed to that hard point of theology, while we are concerned, not with the " nature " of Christ, but with his offices. We have seen that Christ is spoken of as having had glory with the Father before the world was (John 17. 5). If that sentence stood alone, the natural inference from it would be, that Christ existed literally and in fellowship with God before the creation of the world. But we find that the most essential and the most helpful rule, in the interpretation of the oracular sentences of Scripture, is to make one sentence throw light on another. So we find that Christ is also said to have been slain before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13. 8); and, as this latter assertion can be verified only as it recognizes a prospective reference to the death of Christ in the counsels of God, we might naturally ask, why we should not interpret the reference to Christ's existence and glory before his earthly manifestation by the same anticipatory designs of the Almighty. And this question would find ground for its affirmative answer in the fact, that the disciples of Christ are likewise said to have been chosen and beloved of God before the world was made " (Eph. 1. 4); while Christ also says that he had given them the glory which God had given him (John 17. 22). Again: there are many nice distinctions and many varied features in the significations of important words, epithets, and titles, transfigured and impregnated by natural and by pious uses, and committed to technical purposes, through which one would have to search with pains, and not always clearly, in seeking to construct from them a dogmatic opinion. Thus any diligent Bible reader will discover, what the critical scholar can only more learnedly illustrate, that the epithet " first-born," applied to Christ, is a term which by no means designates always a literal precedence or priority in the order of time, but is used also to signify pre-eminence and superiority of quality.

The course of inquiry which I have suggested, and have thus far followed, will not, however, require any such deep and elaborate investigations. The instruction for which we are seeking lies plainly upon the surface of Scripture. We seek to gather from its obvious and its lucid statements what is the place or agency assigned to Jesus Christ in the partition of the efficient work of planting the Gospel in the world. That Gospel is indifferently spoken of as the Gospel of God and the Gospel of Christ. So, also, the church is indifferently entitled the " Church of God" and the " Church of Christ." Sometimes " the name of Christ " stands for his Gospel, or for his doctrine, or for his truth, or for that Divine Agency which Christ represents. If we have found the most explicit and re-iterated statements of the sole supremacy and entire prerogative of Him who is called God, or the Father, in the plan and purpose of the Gospel; so, in strict conformity with this view, we find that a secondary, a derived, a subordinate, and dependent agency is uniformly assigned to Jesus Christ. We do not need to play any variations of meaning upon the use of the word " person," when we apply it to Christ, as theologians are wont to do when they merge three " persons " in the one God. The distinctness of Christ's personality, of his individuality, in that part of the work of the Gospel which is done on the earth, would hardly allow us to suppose that he parted with any element of that personality in his mode of existence and service in heaven. Christ is represented to us as the Image, the Manifestation, the 'Witness of God, — an embodiment of the mind and will of God.

The most adequate idea answering to and taking in all that is written of him and attributed to him would conceive of him as having been, as having lived, acted, spoken, and done, just what God himself would have been, just as He would have lived, acted, spoken, and done, could the Deity himself become a sojourner on earth, a visible companion to men; saving only these two conditions, — that the Deity would never have referred his power and doctrine to one above Him, nor have offered prayer. Saving only these two conditions, Christ spoke and did as we conceive God himself would speak and do if he visibly walked the earth with men. But those two conditions are of exceeding significance, as limitations of the nature of Christ. Christ asserted and accepted for himself an office and a service assigned to him by God. He pointed from himself upwards. He bowed himself, he knelt, he struggled, in prayer. He claimed a high and transcendent office; but it was an office. He came upon a service which man could not perform; but it was a service. He exercised a mighty power; but it was given to him. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled; but the Father sanctified him, and sent him into the world. He had power to lay down his life, and to take it again; but that commandment he had received of his Father. He is to reign until all things are put under him; though " it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under him." Exalted titles, transcendent honors, and superhuman qualities, are ascribed to Jesus Christ, because " it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." But there is no occasion for stumbling, no inevitable risk of losing sight of the distinction between him and God; for though he did say, " I and my Father are one," he signified what he meant by it, by praying that his disciples and himself and God might all be one in the same sense. And in that " he was faithful as a Son," he referred all that he was and said and did to the gift of the Father in him. To him, then, is assigned the office of manifesting God in a life conformed to some conditions of humanity, for the purpose of fulfilling the objects of his mission. " He is the faithful and true witness." God speaks and acts through him. He exhibits to men the qualities of a divine Sonship, and is made the medium and channel of that Divine Grace which re-creates humanity, restores to it the image of God, and adopts men as children, — sons of the Infinite Father That oracular sentences and transcendent honors should be connected with the offices and the name of one who holds this relation to God and men, is no matter of surprise to us. We proceed to gather from the Scriptures the terms of language and of doctrine concerning him.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

" Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you," etc.

" God had sworn that he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne."

" This Jesus hath God raised up. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

" God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

" Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ."

" In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

" Ye denied the Holy One and the Just; and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead."

" And his (Christ's) name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong."

" He (God) shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive, until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken," etc. The apostles taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."

" By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, — by him cloth this man stand before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

" They commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus."

"The rulers were gathered against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed," etc.

" With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

" The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior," etc.

" Daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

" Stephen said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

" And they stoned Stephen, calling out, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And Christ (appearing to Paul) said, " I am Jesus whom thou persecutes," etc.

" And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God; proving that this is very Christ.",

"Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ makes thee whole."

"Jesus of Nazareth went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil; for God was with him."

" Him God raised up the third day, and Showed him openly to us, and commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead."

" The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

" Of David's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus."

" We believe, that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved."

" Barnabas and Paul hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her."

" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

" Paul preached, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

" God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained."

" Paul testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah."

" They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

" The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

" Paul testified repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

" The ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

" Remember the words of the Lord Jesus."

" Felix sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ."

" Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuades me to be a Christian." At Rome, Paul

" preached the kingdom of God, and taught those things which concern the Lord Jesus." —

EPISTLE to ROMANS.

" Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of God, concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God: Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

" I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God."

" The day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel."

"The redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation," etc.
 "We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."
 "In due time, Christ died for the ungodly."
 "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."
 "We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."
 "The grace of God, and the gift by grace, by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."
 "So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death."
 "Reckon yourselves alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus; for the law of the Spirit of life [the spiritual life] in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
 "We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."
 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? From the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."
 "We, being many, are one body in Christ."
 "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."
 "To this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and the living."
 "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ."
 "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself."
 "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died."
 "He that in these things served Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men."
 "For even Christ pleased not himself."
 "The grace is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles."
 "I have, therefore, whereof I may glory, through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God."
 "Greet my helpers in Jesus Christ."
 "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."
 "Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, — to God, only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, forever." —

1st EPISTLE to CORINTHIANS.

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, to all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."
 "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you."
 "Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."
 "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I, of Apollos; and I, of Cephas; and I, of Christ. Is Christ divided?
 "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."
 I omit, in the connection, the passage in Rom. 9. 5, because I accord with the judgment of the best biblical critics, alike Trinitarian and Unitarian, that, properly rendered, it concludes with an ascription to God, thus, — "God, who is over all, be blessed forever!"
 "We preach Christ crucified, — Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."
 "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus."
 "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."
 "We have the mind of Christ."
 "Babes in Christ."
 "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
 "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."
 "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."
 "We are fools for Christ's sake, and ye are wise in Christ."
 "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel."
 "For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us."
 "Your bodies are the members of Christ."
 "He that is called, being free, is Christ's servant."
 "To us there is but one God, the Father; and one Lord, Jesus Christ."
 "The weak brother for whom Christ died."
 "When ye sin against the brethren, ye sin against Christ."
 "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?

" I make the Gospel of Christ without charge."
 " They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ."
 " Neither let us tempt Christ."
 The cup is "the communion of the blood, the bread the communion of the body, of Christ."
 " Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."
 " The head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God."
 " I have received of the Lord Jesus that which I also delivered unto you."
 " Ye do show the Lord's death till he come."
 " Ye are the body of Christ."
 " Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures."
 " He was buried, and rose again the third day: he was seen of Cephas," etc.
 " If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain," etc.
 " We have testified of God that he raised up Christ."
 " If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."
 " As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
 " Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming."
 " Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet."
 " Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 "The second man is the Lord from heaven."
 "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."
 " If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema."
 " The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus." —

2d EPISTLE to CORINTHIANS.

" Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth."
 " As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounded by Christ."
 " We are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus."
 " The Son of God, Jesus Christ, was preached among you by us."
 " Thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ."
 " For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ."
 "In the sight of God speak we in Christ."
 "Ye are the epistle of Christ ministered by us."
 " Such trust have we through Christ to Godward."
 " The light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God."
 " We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves, your servants, for Jesus' sake."
 " The light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ."
 " Bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our body."
 " We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ."
 " The love of Christ constrained us."
 " Though we have known Christ after the flesh, henceforth know we him no more."
 " If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."
 " God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."
 " We are ambassadors for Christ."
 " We pray you in Christ's stead."
 " What concord hath Christ with Belial? "
 " Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor."
 " Our brethren are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ."
 " I beseech you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."
 " Bringing every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 "If any man trust that he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's."
 " The simplicity that is in Christ."
 " That the power of Christ may rest upon me."
 " We speak before God in Christ."
 "Ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me."
 " Christ yet lived' by the power of God."
 " Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."

Such is the use of the name of Jesus Christ, as designating one of the forces, or agencies, by which the church was planted on the earth. Such is the office, such the range of service, filled by him who bears that name; and such was the inspiration of faith and confidence which the name afforded to those who wrought by it. Certainly one would think that Jesus Christ had a full, a distinct, and an intelligible personality.

The phrase the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit, is often, in its largest, fullest sweep of meaning, a synonym, another title, for God. There are passages in the Bible, in which, where the word " God " is now used, we might substitute the expression " the Holy Spirit; " and there are other passages, in which, where the phrase " the Holy Spirit" is used, we might substitute the word " God," and yet leave the sense of the passages wholly unchanged, neither strengthened nor diminished in force, in either case. But we could not make this substitution in all the passages in which these terms are now used; and if any one were to try, for instance, to substitute the word " God " for the phrase " the Holy Spirit," in at least a score of important and emphatic sentences in the New Testament, he would introduce confusion in the sense. In making the experiment, he would be as likely as in any other more direct way to discover the peculiar and most significant purpose which the phrase " the Holy Spirit " is made to serve in the New Testament. He would discover that the phrase is far from being always simply a synonym for the word " God." The phrase is, in fact, used to express a distinct method of divine agencies and influences appropriated for the specific work of the Gospel, —a method of divine agencies and influences so easily distinguishable from all other divine agencies, so prominently announced in the Gospel, and so vital to the Gospel system, as to make it absolutely necessary that there should be a distinct and emphatic name, title, form of speech, for designating it. We meet with the term "Holy Spirit" thrice in the Jewish Scriptures,—the Old Testament; but how rare, how much less emphatic, familiar, and striking, is its use there, from what it is in the New Testament! The fact is, that the Gospel appropriates the phrase as if the Gospel had an exclusive and secured right to it; as if the Gospel only knew how to use it; as if the Gospel had discovered and proved the real purpose and efficiency of the Holy Ghost, and had demonstrated all its functions and power. The writings of St. Paul are strewn all over with the phrase; and he uses it as designating a mighty instrumentality, to the knowledge of which he had come after leaving the school of Gamaliel for the school of Christ. Indeed, the phrase is put to such service in the New Testament as to warrant the conclusion, that its significance and use, whatever they shall prove to be, are original with the Gospel.

This peculiar Christian use of the phrase first presents itself to our notice, in all its original and emphatic force, in the Gospel of St. John. The frequent and striking references to the Holy Spirit, near the close of that Gospel, are in the words of Christ himself. There is an emphasis, or distinctness, in these references, which has always engaged the attention alike of biblical critics and of common readers; and such critics and readers alike have gathered from them a full persuasion, that Christ either referred in those passages to some divine agency that had not previously had a distinct recognition in the faith of his hearers, or that he assigned a wholly new method and intensity of operation and energy to a spiritual force of which before they had had only a dim conception. Either a new divine agent or agency, or else a new manifestation and disclosure and operation of a recognized spiritual force, present themselves as the alternative views to be taken of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the words of Jesus. In the one or the other of these views, the multitude of Christian readers have been persuaded that they must find an article of Christian faith.

An incidental remark, in passing, is called forth to meet a bold suggestion that has a serious bearing here. It has been asserted, in the interest of a skeptical criticism, that the most peculiar and striking references to the offices and agency of the Holy Spirit are found only in the Gospel of John, — not in the other New-Testament writings; and that this significant fact, taken in connection with other marked characteristics of the fourth Gospel, may favor the guess, that St. John indulged his own mystic reveries, his own spiritual dreaming, in his record of Christ's ministry; and has mingled some devout theosophic inventions of his own fancy with the transcript from his memory of the teachings of his Master. To this skeptical suggestion there is a full and triumphant refutation within reach of all careful readers. It is true, that the finer spiritual apprehension of St. John was the source of a truer sympathy between him and his Master, and gave to him the hearing ear, the interpreting mind, and the responsive soul, for some lessons of his Master not caught or recorded by the other evangelists. It is true, also, that Christ's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is more pointedly, richly, and with fuller emphasis, set forth by him than by the other New-Testament writers. St. John alone, of all those writers, quotes the Savior as applying to the Holy Spirit the verbal form of speech which is translated by the words the Comforter." The same original term which is thus translated in the Gospel, is, in the First Epistle of John (chapter 2. ver. 1), rendered, by the translators of our version, " an Advocate; " and there the term is applied to Jesus Christ: " If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." But it is not true, that we find only in St. John's Gospel the peculiar and emphatic doctrine of Christ concerning the Holy Spirit, or indeed any reference to it that is exclusively, in the substance and tone of it, a characteristic of the beloved disciple. On the contrary, this remarkable fact will disclose itself to every careful reader, that, in all the other New-Testament writings, there are references to the offices and agency of the Holy Spirit, which would be obscure, if not really unintelligible, to us, except through the light and the interpretation thrown upon them by the very statements made by Jesus Christ himself, as reported by St. John. The actual work and power referred in the most incidental way, through the Acts and the Epistles, to the Holy Spirit, are in practical test and fulfilment of the theory or the promise of such an agency or agent as recorded by St. John. That some doctrine of the Holy Spirit was one of the most novel and effective agencies employed in planting the new faith, is evident from the most cursory glance at its early history in the Acts and Epistles. It would not be possible for us to comprehend or to connect an intelligible idea with such references, if our minds had not been prepared for them by the words of Christ reported by St. John. The gift and the effects of the Spirit, as manifested on the day of Pentecost, answer exactly to, and will answer to nothing short of, the previous, promise of precisely such a manifestation

as related by the beloved disciple. But it is not John alone of the four evangelists who caught and recorded the utterances of the Savior about the new agency, or the new manifestation, called the Holy Ghost. St. Matthew gives place to the words of Jesus concerning the unpardonable sin of blaspheming the Holy Ghost (12. 32). St. Mark, as does also St. Luke, records the promise, fulfilled in the Acts and the Epistles, that the Holy Spirit should prompt the utterance and the pleas of persecuted disciples, when brought before the tribunals of their enemies (Mark 13. 2; Luke 12. 12). And Luke also reports his Master as speaking distinctly of the Holy Spirit as a grace, or gift, which might be imparted or bestowed: " Our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" (11. 13).

The full and emphatic references to the Holy Spirit, as a promised power for the Gospel, — recorded by St. John, explain all that we find in the Acts and the Epistles as demonstrations, actual workings, of the New Power. The significant sentences at the close of his Gospel — mystical as they may be when read there — seem, as we read the following pages of the New Testament, to give us a key, every ward of which fits into the lock opening to the treasures of the divine word.

Gathering up, then, the teaching of Jesus concerning the Holy Spirit, as recorded by St. John, we find that the Savior spoke his fullest and most tender words of this sort when the hour was approaching for him to leave his disciples. He promises the Holy Spirit as a substitute for his own visible presence, and as a consolation for his absence. He will pray the Father for the Holy Spirit, as for another Comforter, to abide with them forever (14. 16, 17).

There is some confusion caused to English readers of the New Testament by an interchangeable use of the pronouns he and it, applied to the Holy Spirit; leaving the matter in doubt as to whether a person or a thing is thus signified. The confusion arises from the fact, that the original Greek word, — translated into English, Comforter, —being of the masculine gender, requires the corresponding pronoun and relative he and who; while the original word, translated Spirit, being of the neuter gender, requires the pronoun and relative it and which. Our translators, however, have broken the rule of grammar, and have wholly omitted the article before the word truth. The true rendering of the text is, " And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever,—the Spirit of the Truth, which the world cannot receive, because it doth not discern it nor know it: but ye know it; for it dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." As Jesus speaks of another Comforter beside himself, he must himself have answered to what is meant by the word; while the word must also be elastic and comprehensive enough to take in the signification of "the Spirit of the Truth," Is it not a teaching, inspiring, guiding influence'?

It is the Spirit of the Truth, — not discerned, not known, by the world, but known by, dwelling with, and abiding in, the Christian disciple. This Comforter — the Holy Spirit — the Father would send, in the name of Christ, to teach the disciples all things, and to bring to their remembrance whatever Christ had said to them. Again: with some variation of language, but with essentially the same meaning, we have these words: " But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, — the Spirit of the Truth which proceeded from the Father, — he shall testify of me " (15. 26). Yet again we read: " If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you. And, when he comes, he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. When he — the Spirit of the Truth — comes, he will guide you to the whole truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will announce to you things that are to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall tell it unto you" (16. 7-15). And finally, as Jesus visibly departs from his disciples, we read that " he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (20. 22).

Here are the elements furnished us in the Gospels for opening the following records in the New Testament, with an intelligent apprehension of that third evangelic agency through which the Church of Christ was planted on the earth, and a way of communion was opened, that has never been closed, between God and men, through the Spirit of the Truth. On many of the highest themes of interest to our minds, we often realize, that large and august conceptions, even though they may be vague and but in outline, are far more precious to us than when we try to stiffen and define them in hard and positive dogmas. Is it not so with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit? Let us follow it, however, as we have proposed, into texts.

The Holy Spirit was to take the place of Christ, and not to come till he had gone bodily from the earth. A spiritual influence was to be substituted for a bodily presence. It was to be within the gift and direction of Christ. It was the eternal spiritual power of God, appropriated in a direct way for the service of the Christian Church, for direct communion for a believer with God,—the channel and instrument and effective aid of Christian truth. One may almost say that it was to represent and stand for the whole executive and demonstrative spiritual efficiency of God, as monopolized henceforward for the Gospel. So distinct and efficient an agency as this deserved a title, a name. It is certainly distinguishable from those methods of the Divine Power which create worlds and trees, and make the grass grow. The familiarity with which we find this Divine Agent or Agency spoken of, the moment we open the Acts of the Apostles, must impress every reader. The very distinct and always exactly defined range of influence, service, and operation, assigned to it, secures for it all the reverential Christian sentiment and faith due to one of the triple forces for planting, sustaining, and extending the church on the earth.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

After his resurrection, Jesus gave " commandments unto the apostles through the Holy Ghost: " and he bade them " wait in Jerusalem till they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost; " promising them that they should " receive power after that the Holy Ghost had come upon " them. We could not substitute the word " God " in these passages, nor in the large majority of those that follow. The day of Pentecost saw the promise, recorded by St. John, fulfilled. The disciples " were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance." Peter was " filled with the Holy Ghost," when he spoke to the rulers and elders. When the threatened believers met to strengthen each other, after they had " prayed, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Ananias and Sapphira, in "lying to the Holy Ghost, had not lied to men, but unto God," and had " agreed to tempt the Spirit of the Lord." Peter, confronting the high priest with his testimony, said,

" We are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom [which] God hath given to them that are obeying him." The seven deacons chosen to distribute the charities of the church were to be "rulers full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom." Stephen, in his martyrdom, " full of the Holy Ghost," said to his persecutors, " Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." Disciples in Samaria, who had heard only the preaching of the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, and had not been initiated into the full Christian doctrine, " had not received the Holy Ghost." When the laying-on of the apostles' hands had conferred or signified the communication of that gift, Simon the sorcerer sought to purchase the power of bestowing it; but Peter rebuked him for thinking that " the gift of God might be purchased for money."

" The Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself" to the chariot of the treasurer of Candace; and afterwards the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." Ananias was sent to put his hands on the converted Saul, that he " might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." The persecuted churches, in an interval of peace, " walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy-Ghost." " While Peter was thinking on his vision, the Spirit said unto him, Three men seek thee." " The Holy Ghost fell on," and was " poured out," upon the Gentile converts, who " received the Holy Ghost, as well as " the Jewish disciples. " The Spirit bade Peter go with the men " who had come to seek him; and, as he began to speak, " the Holy Ghost fell on those to whom he spoke, as on us at the beginning." It was that " baptism with the Holy Ghost " which the Lord had promised. So God gave the like gift " to all " believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. "And Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost." Agabus " signified by the Spirit " that there was to be a dearth. And again, binding Paul's girdle, he said, prophetically, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews bind its owner." The Holy Ghost said, " Separate me Barnabas and Saul; " and they were afterwards " sent forth by the Holy Ghost." Paul was " filled with the Holy Ghost " when he rebuked Elymas. " The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost."

" God gave to the Gentiles the Holy Ghost, even as he did to us," said Peter. The apostles announce their decision, in council, under the remarkable terms; "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." What can this mean, but " It seemed good to us, guided by the Divine Spirit of our Gospel faith "? Paul and Timothy " were forbidden of the Holy Ghost; " for " the Spirit suffered them not" "to speak in Asia." Some disciples at Ephesus, taught only in John's doctrine, on being questioned " whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed," replied, that they " had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." After Paul had announced the full Christian doctrine, he laid his hands on them, " and the Holy Ghost came on them." It would be hard to substitute the word " God " for " Holy Ghost" in this passage. The believers had certainly heard that there was a God; but they had not heard of that special divine spiritual agency which complemented the doctrinal teaching of Christ. " The Holy Ghost witnessed " to Paul that persecution awaited him in every city. The Holy Ghost had made the pastors at Miletus the overseers of their flocks. "The disciples, through the Spirit," warned Paul " not to go to Jerusalem." —

EPISTLE TO ROMANS.

" Jesus Christ, declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness."

" The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

" If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

" If ye by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

" For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

" Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

" The Spirit also bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

" We have the first-fruits of the Spirit."

" Likewise the Spirit also helped our infirmities."

" The Spirit itself makes intercession for us."

" My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Ghost."

"The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

" Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

“ That the offering-up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”

“ Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.”

“ I beseech you by the love of the Spirit.” —

1st EPISTLE to CORINTHIANS.

“ God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searched all things; yea, the deep things of God.”

“ The things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God.”

“ We have received the Spirit, which is of God.”

“ The words which the Holy Ghost teaches.”

“ The natural man received not the things of the Spirit of God.”

“ Know ye not that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

“ Ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

“ Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God.”

“ I think also that I have the Spirit of God.”

“ No man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

“ There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.”

“ The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”

“ All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit.”

“ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” —

2d EPISTLE to CORINTHIANS.

“ God hath given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

“ The epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.”

“ How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? ”

“ Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

“ We are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

“ God hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”

“ Approving ourselves as the ministers of God by the Holy Ghost.”

We have thus distributed under their appropriate heads the sentences found in the scriptural documents which we proposed to examine, assigning respectively to God, to Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, the office and agency appropriated to each of them in the plan and in the planting of the Gospel. It remains that we bring together all the passages of the New Testament which present the three evangelical names in one grammatical sentence.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Matt. 28. 19.

For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him [Christ]. John 3. 34.

Jesus, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, etc. Acts 2. 33.

Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. Acts 7. 55.

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost. Acts 10. 38.

If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He, etc. Rom. 8. 11.

I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. Rom. 15. 30.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. 2 Cor. 13. 14.

Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts. Gal. 4. 6.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom, etc. Eph 1. 17.

For through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Eph. 2. 18.

In whom [Christ] ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. 2. 22.

Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God. Heb. 9. 14.

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1. 2.

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. 1 Peter 3. 18.

I have already remarked, that the sentences which thus bring together the names of God, of Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, might reasonably be expected to furnish the most facile materials for the statement or exhibition of the doctrine of a Triad of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, if that be, indeed, a Gospel doctrine. But how unlike are the simple contents of those sentences to the metaphysics of that doctrine! Still these sentences, as do the other classes of sentences which we have reviewed, present us with emphasis the three evangelic names.

Thus we find it to be all through the sacred record. All the planning and working and aiding and strengthening, all the directing and inspiring and blessing, involved in the planting of the Gospel in this world, is distributed into three portions; and each portion is assigned respectively to God, the Father; to Jesus Christ; and to the Holy Spirit. No history, no narrative, is so lucid, as is, in this respect, the Gospel record. No joint work was ever done in this world, no partnership or fellowship was ever engaged in any enterprise, in which the share of each laborer or agency was so definitely and accurately distributed and assigned, as is the whole practical work of the Gospel parted, step by step, act by act, to God, to Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit.

Now, the doctrine of the Trinity, in the largest and most generous view which we can take of it, is to be regarded as the result of the efforts of the minds of multitudes of Christian disciples to do justice to these plain statements of Scripture. Leave out of view, for a moment, the vain speculation connected with the doctrine of the Trinity as an attempt to find a Triad of personalities in the Godhead, and look at the subject only practically. Here are three names brought together to define agents or agencies, partners, coworkers, joint actors, in the Gospel service. Christians reverently recognize this combination of agencies in their divine harmony of purpose and action; and then the question arises, " What are we to think about the relation that exists between these Three? " It is at this point that what Neander calls the " practical Trinity " of the Gospel system assumes its ground; and it is also at this point that speculation begins its theoretical systematizing, for the sake of developing a dogma about the mode of the divine existence, or about the internal constitution of the Godhead. The method of thought and the exercise of faith required for dealing with the practical Trinity are quite unlike those which are engaged upon the speculative Trinity. The practical Trinity distributes the divine agencies employed in the work of the Gospel into three sets of activities, three directions and spheres of efficiency, each of which contributes its own joint aid in the Gospel dispensation, — God, the Father, planning and perfecting the work; Jesus Christ manifesting the divine life; and the Holy Spirit, which is the demonstrative spiritual energy of God operating through Christian truth, being the medium of divine influence to the heart of the believer. The speculative Trinity goes far beyond and away from this subjective mode of conception, and proceeds to construct a theory of an objective character; viz., that the Divine Nature unites three distinct personalities, each of which is essentially and independently God.

Now, when we are told that the vast majority of Christians in every age have been, and still are, Trinitarians, we have to ask, What is meant by being a Trinitarian? Are we to regard it as the main or the preponderating element in that title, that everyone who assumes it or bears it signifies thereby, that he goes beyond the range of all mortal conceptions to catch and hold the idea that the one God exists in a Triad of persons? No: I have read the works and conferred with the minds of very many avowed Trinitarians all in vain if I have not certified to myself, beyond all doubt, this assurance, — that it is not for the purpose of speculating about the mode of the divine existence or the contents of the Godhead, but simply to do justice to the evangelical recognition of three divine agencies in the practical work of the Gospel, that they embrace the doctrine of the Trinity. If that inference be true, — and I have no more doubt of its truth than I have of the existence of the sun, — then I feel at liberty to insist that the majority of Christian believers have accepted only what is defined as the practical Trinity, in distinction from the speculative Trinity. Their minds are filled with a few or more of those Scripture sentences which we have been classifying, but which the mass of readers and hearers do not classify; and from the blending together, without discrimination, of the divine works and offices going with the three evangelic Names, multitudes acquiesce in inferring that some doctrine of the Trinity, they know not exactly what, is necessary to do justice to the obvious teaching of the New Testament. All that they design or aim after, or intend to believe or to accept, is, that, when the Gospel reveals to them new and endearing relations with God, — adding adoption by him in Christ, and communion with him by the Holy Spirit, to the relation of a creature to the Creator, — the Gospel fixes their faith upon three divine Co-workers, — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To millions and millions who have been ranked as Trinitarians, and have thought themselves Trinitarians, this, and only this, has been the substance of their Trinitarianism. They may have assented afterwards, and through a much less independent and responsive action of their minds, to the speculative device into which Trinitarian-ism developed itself; namely, that, in the one God, there are actually three persons, or independent and organic subsistence. They may have assented to that speculative theory; that is, they may have been

willing, when out of their depth in the floods of mystery or floating in the abysses of their ignorance, to catch at any buoy that offered them a hold, without considering that the buoy was floating in the same sea with themselves. But if any one tells me that the vast majority of Christians, ranked as Trinitarians, have puzzled their brains upon that problem of the Godhead, as a Unit of Being, composed of a Triad of Persons, I can only say, with due deference, I do not believe it: nor do I think I should affront charity if I added, that I know the assertion is not true. Multitudes have accepted the notion, as taught to them by trusted guides in religion. Others have accepted it as a hiding-place, a relief from perplexity, a way of disposing of complicated doctrines, which, they are told, are revealed. Others, still, have, after a fashion, verified the dogma by patching together sentences, and scraps of Scripture into a complex mosaic of doctrine; the process and the result being something as follows: — " God the Father, and Jesus Christ, are certainly spoken of as distinct persons; the Holy Spirit, though more frequently referred to as a gift or influence, that can be bestowed, ' be poured out, ' or that can fall upon, ' the subjects of it, is, at least in two or three sentences, spoken of as a person: to these three persons divine offices are assigned, and divine honors and attributes are rendered: therefore each of them is essentially God, though God is nevertheless One." Some few persons have really, and, as they think, with intelligent and enlightened reverence, certified to themselves the speculative doctrine of the Trinity, and have assimilated it with the faith of their souls. My own conviction is, that this class of persons, who have heartily accepted the speculative doctrine of the Trinity, after a thorough and independent study of all its elements and bearings, does not outnumber those, who, after the same processes of heart and intellect engaged upon the doctrine, have rejected it as visionary and thoroughly unscriptural. Nor must we forget in this enumeration still another class of persons, who have intensified and exaggerated the doctrine, and have mystified their own minds and feelings about it; and who then speak of it as the very arcana of the Gospel, its central truth, its wellspring, its pivot-point of doctrine.

And yet, notwithstanding all the statements which I have just made, I have now to note the fact, that the Orthodox-Church doctrine receives what Neander terms the speculative Trinity. All those views of the relation between God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, which regard and interpret the New-Testament doctrine concerning them as simply representing to us three modes of manifestation, or three directions or methods of operation, of the Divine Essence, are convicted and denounced heresies. " The church " has repudiated and condemned them in every shape and phase under which they may be held. Every opinion on this subject is heretical which stops, even by a hair's breadth, short of the ecclesiastical dogma, that, in the Godhead, there are three independent and co-equal persons. Church orthodoxy is not content with any other formula for its faith on this point than one which asserts that there is a permanent, essential, and organic basis in the essence of the Godhead for a Triad of subsistence. The Antitrinitarian may go the length of admitting, that, according to his reading of the New Testament, and his view of the doctrine to be drawn from it, some element contributed by the Gospel revelation of God, the Father; of Jesus Christ; and of the Holy Spirit, — is necessary to constitute the God of the Christian. But this, too, is " heresy," because it stops short of the full recognition of three real and actual personalities in the Godhead. Church orthodoxy is committed, by its formulas and standards at least, to the speculative Trinity. How did this come about? The process is known, in every stage of it, to a thorough Christian scholar; and every stage of it, too, is evidently seen by him as transpiring within the range of a human philosophy and an earth-born metaphysics.

Among the passages found in the New Testament, in which God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are named in connection in a single grammatical sentence, I omitted to copy one which we read in our common version of the Scriptures. It is the following sentence from First Epistle of John v. 7: " There are Three that bear record in heaven, — the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One." That sentence, which John never wrote, and which he never saw; which had no place in Scripture till comparatively modern times; which is repudiated ' as an exposed and unquestionable interpolation by all competent and honest biblical critics, Roman Catholic and Protestant, of every sect and name, — that sentence is no unfair type of the presence in the Christian creed of the doctrine which the sentence comes very near to stating. We know the contents of the Christian Scriptures before that sentence was foisted into them. We know the contents of the Christian creed before it contained a speculative doctrine of the Trinity. We can trace the process by which both the interpolated and spurious text, and the metaphysical and thoroughly human doctrine, came in where they were not before. How significant is the fact,—how suggestive, at least, ought it to be to Trinitarians, — that the only sentence in the whole Bible which even approximates to a statement of their doctrine is a corrupt and fraudulent interpolation of Scripture !

Anyone, who is interested to trace the process by which the speculative doctrine of a Triad of persons in the Godhead wrought its way into the prevailing creed of Christendom, can find the information which he seeks, in the works of Neander, to which I have already referred. It will require a fixed engaged of mind, and a faculty for abstract thought and the apprehension of subtle distinctions, verbal and substantial, in any reader, to comprehend what is written in those pages. The subject-matter is difficult, the method of its development is necessarily intricate, and the Germanisms of the writer are an additional embarrassment to the reader.

Neander was reputed a Trinitarian; but his Trinitarianism is of the most shadowy character. Probably Unitarians are far better satisfied than are Trinitarians with his method of dealing with doctrinal discussions. The latter, however, are forced to accept his manuals, for lack of better from an equally competent source. It is not strange that the reluctance to admit some of the damaging concessions made in his candid pages should have led the able and laborious American translator of his "History of the Christian Church" occasionally to qualify the strong utterances of the original. The English editor of the American translation, who professed to "revise" it, has tampered with the work.

The help and information afforded by the great church historian are especially valuable on two accounts. First, as showing what are

the primary materials in the New Testament for any doctrinal system, and how these materials were employed by Christians for more than two hundred years, without resulting in any such doctrine of the Trinity as was afterwards received; second, as explaining to us through what additional elements of speculation and of constructive ingenuity the doctrine of the Trinity was gradually developed. Nor is anyone, however his sympathy or faith may be at issue with this metaphysical intermeddling with themes too high for the reach of man, in a fit mood of mind or heart for reading those pages, unless he can discern, that, though the themes rise to insoluble mysteries, there may be even practical benefits in the study and discussion of them. It is better that human brains should ache, than that mind or heart should deny themselves exercise upon the deep things of God.

The speculative doctrine of the Trinity, which has received the stamp of orthodoxy in the formulas of the Christian Church, is wholly and entirely the result of the constructive ingenuity of the human intellect. The problem was to develop a dogmatic conception and statement of the relation that subsists — not merely for the purpose of revelation, but in the eternal and organic essence of the divine economy — between God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Scripture, indeed, furnished materials for the work, as a quarry furnishes the stock for the architect; but the result was a marvelous combination of the wit of man with the wisdom of God. The process by which the speculative doctrine was developed is one of profound and instructive interest in all its stages, — more so, however, in its stages than in its result, — when we regard it purely as a process pursued by the efforts of the mind, quickened by the most intense zeal of the spiritual instinct, and engaging all those antagonisms of the speculative faculty which are brought into the sharpest conflict only when they are exercised upon abstract themes. Scripture, it was agreed on all sides, did not offer a full-shaped and defined doctrine on the great problem. That was to be constructed when the time should come for it. Some seven or eight generations of Christians lived and died, content to read what we have been reading from the pages of the New Testament, without having the help of dogmatic formulas to guide their belief, however they may or may not have felt the need of them. They looked to God, the Father, as the Fountain of Gospel blessedness; they believed in Jesus Christ, as the channel through which it flowed to the world; and they felt the power of the Holy Spirit, which incorporated the truth and the hope with the living experience of their souls. But they had not engaged upon the metaphysics which was by and by to perplex " the simplicity that is in Christ." The elements of the coming conflict were, however, gathering and working together. The first debate was raised upon the nature of Christ, and his organic relation to the Godhead. The Hebrew mind communicated its idea of Sonship from and with the Father, — an idea that centered in love, in filial conformity and tender affinity of affection. The Greek mind contributed, through the Alexandrine philosophy, the idea of the Logos, the Word, — which expressed the outgoing and working of the intelligence of God, or an intermediate operation between the Divine Essence and the creation, — the first link in the chain which stretches outward from God.

These two ideas furnished the scriptural and the metaphysical elements to be wrought into a dogma concerning Jesus Christ. Soon after came in the subtle question about the likeness or the identity of substance between the Father and the Son; and the question, whether the generation of the Son was eternal, or dated in some epoch of ages. Neander intends to deal tenderly with Arius, when he tells us, that, with some excellent gifts and high qualities, " he possessed no depth of religious intuition or apprehension of Christian truths, and hence had not the disposition fitted for receiving several dogmas." The historian adds, " The profound idea, expressed by Origen, of an eternal, beginningless generation of the Son, was inconceivable to his matter-of-fact understanding." And is it not equally inconceivable to anybody's and everybody's understanding? But I must not allow myself to be drawn into the mazes of the disputation which ends in establishing in terms the dogma of the Deity of Christ, as defined by ascribing to him co-eternity and co-substantiality with God. Still another and quite independent element of the work of theorizing, needed for the development of the speculative doctrine of the Trinity, was that which was presented by the Holy Spirit. The method of dealing with that element of the theory, and the stage which had been reached in dogmatizing upon it, are well defined by Gregory Nazianzen, as late as A.D. 380, thus: " Some of our theologians regard the Spirit simply as a mode of divine operation; others, as a creature of God; others, as God himself; others, again, say that they know not which of these opinions to accept, from their reverence for Holy Writ, which says nothing about it " (De Trinitate, 2. c. 29).

Happily for those who cannot read the elaborate and difficult tomes of church history, there are easily accessible three documents, symbols of faith, which present, in a most significant way, first the simple elements of Christian doctrine; and then, successively, the development of ecclesiastical dogmatizing with them and upon them. The first is the so-called Apostles' Creed, which is wholly free of Trinitarians; the second is the Nicene Creed, in its original and modified forms, which exhibits the incipient stages of Trinitarianism in relation to the Father and the Son; third, the Athanasian Creed, dating from the fifth century, which presents Trinitarians in its complete development. Marvelous is the contrast between the tortuous method of doctrinal statement in that formula and the Scripture sentences which we have been reading. As a spurious text, interpolated into the New Testament in the interest of the doctrine of the Trinity, is no unfair exponent of the relation of that doctrine to the actual substance of the Gospel; so the scholastic subtleties and the metaphysical puzzles of the Athanasian Creed may stand as significant symbols of the tricks with language and the perplexities of thought needed alike in the statement and in the conception of the doctrine which it so consistently presents to us. Suppose an attempt, made as an experiment in one of our public schools, to teach either of the arts of reading, grammar, arithmetic, or logic, through the help of the Athanasian Creed! Certain it is, whether or not the pupils were effectually warned against confounding the divinities therein recognized, it would be difficult to guard against confusion in " the humanities." Yet that creed is really a consistent, if not the best possible, result of an effort to grapple with the metaphysical subtleties with which it deals. Hard as the creed is, it nevertheless practices a kind of mercy in its torture; as it fails to recognize, or to press upon us, at least one-half of the gnarled and knotty elements which enter into its whole doctrine.

In rejecting, without compromise or hesitation, the speculative doctrine of the Trinity, we must be content to bear the censure of so-called Orthodoxy, with whatever penalties accompany it. Our chief plea must be, that we cannot conceive that the eminently practical and intelligible doctrines of the Gospel are based upon an abstruse and occult dogma about a Triad of Persons in the Godhead. We are at liberty to elaborate the contents of the Scripture into a theory more consistent with their teachings: or, what is better still for most persons, we can learn to live as Christians, without having any dogmatic theory about the organic relation that exists between God, the Father; his Son. Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit.

Two or three questions, which are uniformly opened in connection with the long discussion we have pursued, invite a few closing words.

Shall we call Christ God? Well, pause upon the question. What shall we gain, and what shall we lose, if we call Christ God? Shall he be additional to the Being whom he himself called God? or shall he be identical with Him? We had a God before, —the God whom Christ revealed, to whom Christ prayed. Why should we confuse ourselves in this profound theme, under the vain hope of relieving ourselves? We may, indeed, infer, from the sum of the Gospel teachings, that we should not have known the Father but through the Son; and that the God in whom we believe testifies of himself to our souls through, the divine life manifested in Christ. So far, then, as Christ represents and manifests the Father, he is a part of God; and what we learn and receive from him is necessary to complete our idea of God. But he cannot be to us both the Revealer and the Revealed. If we accept him as God, we lose him as a manifestation in the life of humanity.

Shall we pray to Christ? No: he himself forbade us to do that; and taught us, when we pray, to say, " Our Father." Nor is there an instance, an example, in the New Testament, in which the highest religious homage is addressed to Christ. The martyr Stephen sends forth an ejaculation on his last breath, " Lord Jesus, receive my spirit; " but it is to " Jesus standing on the right hand of God."

Shall we call the Holy Spirit God? No harm can come of that. It would be perfectly natural for us to do it. It is done in the New Testament. Certainly it is better to do that than to call the Holy Spirit one of three persons in the Godhead.

Shall we address prayer to the Holy Spirit? Yes: it is one way of addressing God. The saints of old have used that title of the Hearer, as well as of the Inspirer of prayer. Our devout, our earnest, our fervent prayers are addressed to God, by the Spirit, in the name of Christ. Let the prayer be sincere; and we may trust that the Father will not reject it because we choose either of his divine names, or titles, by which to address Him.

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