



**SPIRITUAL UNION
AND
COMMUNION**

**1. INTRODUCTION
AND 2. DIVINE UNION**

A. W. Pink

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1. Introduction.

The present writer has not a doubt in his mind that the subject of *spiritual union* is the most important, the most profound, and yes, the most blessed of any that is set forth in the sacred Scriptures; and yet, sad to say, there is hardly any which is now more generally neglected. The very expression “spiritual union” is unknown in most professing Christian circles, and even where it is employed it is given such a protracted meaning as to take in only a fragment of this precious truth. Probably its very profundity is the reason why it is so largely ignored in this superficial age. Yet there are still a few left who are anxious to enter into God’s best and long for a fuller understanding of the deep things of the Spirit; and it is, principally, with these in mind that we take up this subject.

There are three principal unions revealed in the Scriptures which are the chief mysteries and form the foundation of our most holy faith. First, the union of three Divine Persons in one Godhead: having distinct personalities, being co-eternal and co-glorious, yet constituting one Jehovah. Second, the union of the Divine and human natures in one Person, Jesus Christ, Immanuel, being God and man. Third, the union of the Church to Christ, He being the Head, they the members, constituting one mystical body. Though we cannot form an exact idea of any of these unions in our imaginations, because the depth of such mysteries is beyond our comprehension, yet it is our bounden duty to believe them all, because they are clearly revealed in Scripture, and are the necessary foundation for other points of Christian doctrine. Hence it is our holy privilege to prayerfully study the same, looking unto the Holy Spirit to graciously enlighten us thereon.

The most wonderful thing of all, and yet the greatest mystery, in the natural world, is a *union*, namely, that conjunction which God has made between mind and matter, the soul and the body. What

finite intelligence would or could have conceived of the joining together of an immaterial spirit and a clod of clay! What so little alike as the soul and an organized piece of earth! Who had ever imagined such a thing as animate and thinking dust! or that a spirit should be so linked with and tied to a carnal body that while *that* is preserved in health, *it* cannot free itself! And yet there *is* a union, a real union, a personal union, between the soul and the body. But that is only a *natural* mystery, and falls immeasurably below the *sacred* mystery of the union between human beings and the Lord of Glory.

The Scriptures have much to say upon the union which exists between Christ and His people. “At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you” (John 14:20). “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17). “For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church” (Eph. 5:30, 32). What an astonishing thing it is that there should be a union between the Son of God and worms of the earth!—infinitely more so than if the king of Great Britain had married the poorest and ugliest woman in all his realm. How immeasurable is the distance between the Creator and the creature, between Deity and mortal man! How wonderful beyond words that sinful wretches should be made one with Him before whom the seraphim veil their faces and cry “holy, holy, holy!”

“The union of Christ to His people is an amazing subject. It is an eternal union; it is an union made known and enjoyed in time; it is an union which will be openly and manifestatively declared in all its glory and perfection in the latter day; it is a grace union; it is also a glory union. As it is the foundation of all the gracious acting’s of Christ towards His Church in a time state, so it is of all the glory He will put on His Church and communicate unto His people at the last day. I cannot but lament we are most of us so great strangers to these important and heavenly truths. Depend on it, *we are great losers hereby*. The people of God lose much because they neglect truths of the greatest importance. In the present day they are too neglectful of important truths. They are willingly ignorant of them.

“We treat the Scriptures in the present day as though the less we

know of the deep things of God, so much the better. Alas! Alas! This, let us think of it as we may, is to cast contempt on God Himself. Nor will it serve to say we do not so mean or intend. It is a matter of fact; we are too neglectful of those Divine Truths and doctrines which concern the glory of Christ. The ancient and glorious settlements of grace are too little in our thoughts. It is sensibly felt, and by some very expressively confessed and acknowledged, that the influences of the Holy Spirit are very greatly suspended. Yet *the cause* is overlooked. Most assuredly one grand reason why we have so little of His sacred presence with us, and His power and influence manifested amongst us may be laid to the account of neglecting to preach supernatural, spiritual truth, and the mysteries of the everlasting Gospel” (S.E. Pierce, 1812).

The vital importance of this subject of the union of the Church to Christ may be clearly seen from the place which it occupies in the High Priestly prayer of Christ. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may *be one*; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee” (John 17:20, 21). Our Lord here began His prayer for the whole body of His people by speaking of the union which they had with Him and His Father in Him, and He spends the verses which follow in expressing the blessings which follow as the fruits thereof. We are *not* to conceive that Christ here prayed for an union *to be* brought about or obtained; no, for it *was* established from all eternity: rather was He praying that His beloved might be blest with the clear knowledge of it, so that they might enjoy all the benefits of the same in their own souls.

“And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may *be one*, even as We are one” (John 17:22). This subject of the union between Himself and the elect was truly sweet and blessed to the heart of Christ. He knew that the knowledge and use of it is of great value and service to His people, therefore did He speak of it again and again that His saints in all ages might receive the knowledge of it into their minds and enjoy in their hearts the blessings contained in it. And, my readers, if Christ Himself esteemed this truth of union with Himself as a foundation truth, we should learn to think of it so also. We should bring ourselves unto

the closest and prayerful study of the same, for by it our faith and hope are sustained and kept in exercise on God our Saviour.

“And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may *be one*, even as We are one.” This petition is the very centre of Christ’s prayer, expressing the supreme desire of the Saviour’s mind towards His redeemed: it summed up the uttermost longing of His heart toward them. The union about which He prayed is such that thereby the Father and the Son dwell in us and we in Them. It is such that the elect are so joined unto God and His Christ that it is the very highest union which the elect are capable of. It is the chiefest and greatest of all blessings, being the foundation from which all others proceed.

“I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect *in one*” (verse 23). A great variety of blessings are set before us in the Gospel. Salvation is an unspeakable one, yet not so great as our union to the Person of Christ. If we had not been united to Christ, He had not been our Saviour: it was because we stood eternally related to Him that He was most graciously pleased to undertake for us. The grace of justification is an unspeakable blessing, yet not so great as that of union, because the effect can never be equal to the cause which produces it. To be *in Christ* must exceed all the blessings which flow *from* Him which we have or ever shall partake of, either on earth or in Heaven. Communion with Christ is unspeakably blessed, yet not so great as *union*, for our union is the foundation of all communion. It is the greatest of all those super-creation “spiritual blessings” (Eph. 1:3) which the Father bestowed on the Church before sin entered the universe. It is the fruit of God’s eternal love to His people.

Union with Christ is the foundation of all spiritual blessings, so that if there had been no *connection with* Him, there could be no regeneration, no justification, no sanctification, no glorification. It is so in the natural world—adumbrating the spiritual: sever one of the members from my physical body, and it is dead; only by its union with my person does it partake of life. “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9): the word “fellowship” signifies such a co-partnership between persons that they have a joint interest in one

and the same enjoyment which is common between them. Now this fellowship or communion with Christ is entirely dependent upon our *union with Him*, even as much as the branch's participation of the sap and juice is dependent upon its union and coalition with the stock of the tree. Take away union, and there can neither be communion nor communication.

As it is for Christ's sake that God bestows upon His people all the blessings of salvation, so according to His eternal constitution those blessings could only be enjoyed in a state of communion with Him. The varied character of that communion it will be our joy to unfold, as the blessed Spirit is pleased to enable us, in the chapters [booklets] which follow. But the foundation of that vital, spiritual, and experimental union which the saints have with their Beloved in a time state and which they will enjoy forever in Heaven, was laid by God in that mystical union which He established between the Mediator and His elect before the foundation of the world, when He appointed Him to be the Head and they the members of His body: when God gave Christ to them and gave them to Christ in everlasting marriage.

In consequence of God's having given the Church to Christ in marriage before the foundation of the world, He says to His people, "I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies" (Hosea 2:19); "thy Maker is thine Husband" (Isa. 54:5). And therefore does the Church exclaim, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His" (Song. 2:16). "Consider the closeness and intimacy of the union between Him and them, and let this encourage thee to lean and live on Him by faith. It is far more intimate and dear than the union between husband and wife among men, for they are indeed 'one flesh,' but He is 'one body' and 'one spirit' (1 Cor. 6:20) with His spouse; He is *in them*, and they are *in Him*. And by virtue of this intimate union, thou hast a title to Him and to His whole purchase" (Ebenezer Erskine, 1775).

In consequence of this eternal marriage-union between Christ and His Church there is a communion of names. In Jeremiah 23:6 we read, "And this is His name whereby *He* shall be called, the Lord our righteousness," and in Jeremiah 33:16 we are told, "And this is

the name wherewith *she* shall be called, The Lord our righteousness”—this by virtue of her oneness with Him. So again in 1 Corinthians 12:12 the Church is actually designated “the Christ,” while in Galatians 3:16 and Colossians 1:24 the Head and His Church forming one body are conjointly referred to as “Christ;” hence when Saul of Tarsus was assaulting the Church, its Head protested, “Why persecutest thou *Me*?” (Acts 9:4). But what is yet more remarkable, we find the Lord Jesus given the name of His people: in Galatians 6:16 the Church is denominated, “the *Israel* of God,” while in Isaiah 49:3 we hear God saying *to the Mediator* “Thou art My servant, O *Israel*, in whom I will be glorified”!

Unspeakably precious is this aspect of our wonderful subject. In Colossians 3:12 Christians are exhorted to “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies.” Each of those titles are given to the saints because of their *union with Christ*. They are “the elect of God” because *He* is God’s “Elect” (Isa. 42:1); they are “holy” because conjoined to God’s “Holy One” (Psa. 16:10); they are “beloved” because married to Him of whom the Father says, “This is My Beloved Son” (Matt. 3:17). Again, we are told that God “hath made *us kings and priests*” (Rev. 1:5), which is only because we are *united to Him* who is “the King of kings” and the “great High Priest.” Is Christ called “the Sun of righteousness” (Mal. 4:2)? So we are told, “Then shall the righteous shine forth *as the sun* in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:43)! Does the Redeemer declare “I am the rose of Sharon” (Song. 2:1)? Then He promises of the redeemed “The desert (their fruitless state by nature) shall rejoice, and blossom *as the rose*” (Isa. 35:1)—the only two occasions the “rose” is mentioned in Holy Writ!

The union between Christ and His Church is so real, so vital, so intimate that God has never viewed the one apart from the other. There is such an indissoluble oneness between the Redeemer and the redeemed, such an absolute identification of interest between them, that the Father of mercies never saw them apart: He never saw Christ *as “Christ”* without seeing His mystical body; He never saw the Church apart from its Head. Therefore the Holy Spirit has delighted to emphasize this wondrous and glorious fact in many Scriptures. In connection with Christ’s birth we read, “Forasmuch

then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same” (Heb. 2:14). Further, we are told, “In whom also *ye* are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of *Christ*” (Col. 2:11)—His actual circumcision was our mystical circumcision. At His baptism Christ was “numbered *with* the transgressors,” and hence, speaking as the Representative of the entire election of grace, He said, “Thus it becometh *us* (not simply “Me”) to fulfil all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15).

We are told that when the Saviour was nailed to the tree “our old man was *crucified with Him*” (Rom. 6:6). We are told that when He expired at Calvary “if One died for all, then were all dead” (2 Cor. 5:14). We are told that when He was revived, we were “quickened *together with Christ*” (Eph. 2:5). He did not rise again as a single and private person, but as the Head of His Church: “*ye then be risen with Christ*” (Col. 3:1). Nor is that all: in Ephesians 2:6 we are told, “And hath raised us up together, and made us *sit together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” O how surpassingly wonderful is the Christian’s oneness with Christ: “Because *as He is, so are we in this world*” (1 John 4:17). When Christ appears in glory it will not be alone: “Then shall *ye also appear with him in glory*” (Col. 3:4).

***“One in the tomb; one when He rose;
One when He triumph’d o’er His foes;
One in Heaven He took His seat,
While seraphs sang all Hell’s defeat.
With Him, their Head, they stand or fall,
Their Life, their Surety, and their All.”***

Union and communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit who dwells personally in the saints, is a most glorious and transcendent wonder of Divine grace. Nature cannot comprehend it; carnal reason cannot grasp it; none can have the least real perception of its nature, importance, or excellency, but such as are born from above; nor can the regenerate either, except as they are Divinely enlightened and supernaturally lifted up into the true knowledge and enjoyment of the same. Spiritual life, and all its activities, is beyond the ken of mere intellect, consisting as it does

in communion with God Himself. The oneness of the Church with Christ is a blessed reality, which none but the Spirit of God can open to the renewed mind and give right views of it. It is His royal prerogative so to do: it is part of His official work according to the eternal settlements of grace: His work is to glorify Christ, to enthrone Him in the hearts of His blood-bought people.

Were it not that the Holy Spirit “searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10), and that we had the unfailing promise of Christ (which needs to be laid hold of by faith and pleaded before God) that this infallible Teacher “will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13), it would be the very height of presumption for us to attempt to write upon such a subject. The very profundity of our present theme has been clearly intimated by God’s designating it a “mystery.” It is remarkable that twice only in the sacred Scriptures do we read of a “*great* mystery:” once when the reference is to that ineffable union of the human nature with the Godhead in the Person of Immanuel—“great is the mystery of godliness” (1 Tim. 3:16); and once when mention is made of the mystical union subsisting between Christ and His Church—“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:32).

To aid our finite understandings, a variety of figures and natural analogies are used to express the oneness of Christ and His people. The marriage of Adam and Eve in their unfallen state, by which they became “one flesh” (Eph. 5:31) is a striking resemblance of the union between Christ and His Church, for He is the Husband (Isa. 54:5), she is the Spouse (Song. 2:1): as Adam said of Eve “this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (Gen. 2:23), so the saints are assured “we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones” (Eph. 5:30). Another resemblance or type is that of the head and members of our physical organism. In the human body there is such an intimate relation and vital connection between the head and its members that if severed the one could have no living existence apart from the other. Thus it is in the Body mystical: Christ is the Head, believers are the members: see 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27; Ephesians 4:15, 16.

A third resemblance is that of the root and the branches: there is a

union between them, otherwise how should the one convey juice and nourishment to the others. So it is with Christ and believers: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:5). The same figure is found again in a number of passages in the Epistles: there we read of being "*grafted in* among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree" (Rom. 11:17); of being "*rooted and built up in Him*" (Col. 2:7). This is a blessed analogy between Christ and believers and the root and the branches, in point of union and in point of influence: the root conveys life and nourishment to the branches; so does Christ to those who are one with Him. With this resemblance we may link the simile used by our Lord: "the corn of wheat" (John 12:24) falling into the ground, with its embryo increase of "much fruit" wrapped up within itself.

Still another resemblance is the foundation and the building which is found again and again in Scripture. Here too there is a *union*, for in a building all the stones and timbers being joined and fastened together upon the foundation, make but one entire structure. So it is here. The saints are "God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9), Christ Himself being the "Foundation" of that building (verse 11). And again, we are said to be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20). The building itself is the complement of the foundation, but remove it, and the whole superstructure topples to the ground. How blessed to be assured by God, "Behold, I lay in Zion a *sure* foundation" (Isa. 28:16). Finally, Christians are referred to as "lively (living) stones, are built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5), which tells us that our union with Christ is both a mystical and a vital one.

In addition to the various figures and resemblances which God has graciously designed to employ so as to aid our feeble minds in grasping something of the mysterious and glorious union which exists between His Son and His people, there are also types in the Old Testament which throw light thereon. A notable one is found in Exodus 28: "And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty . . . And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel . . . And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod

for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and *Aaron* shall bear *their* names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial . . . And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, holiness to the Lord. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon *his* forehead, that *they* may be accepted before the LORD" (verses 2, 9, 12, 36-38). Thus was the whole Israel of God represented before Jehovah *in* the person of Aaron—blessed adumbration of the identification with our great High Priest. "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments" (Psa. 133:2)—figure of the Holy Spirit communicated to Christ *and* His people.

Communion with Christ is our participation with Him in the *benefits* flowing from His several offices. As in marriage there must be a union before there can be any communion (sharing together) of estates and conditions, so before we can obtain anything *from* Christ we must first be one *with* Him: all is *in* Christ for us. "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:12), and the term "life" sums up all spiritual blessings, just as physical "death" cuts off from all temporal mercies. We "have" the Son by God's eternal gift to us, as He possesses us by the Father's eternal gift of us to Him. Therefore it is written, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is *given*" (Isa. 9:6)—as in marriage: God made a grant of His Son to us, and *that* included all: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him *also* freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32).

"For we are made *partakers* of Christ" (Heb. 3:14): He and we are made one, "*joint* heirs" (Rom. 8:17). "Being united *to* Christ, we are possessed of all *in* Christ, so far as is consistent with our capacities of receiving and God's ordination and appointment in giving. Union gives us interest in the personal merits and righteousness of Christ and the benefits of His mediatory actions; they are ours to all effects and purposes, as if we ourselves had

satisfied and obeyed the law. Why? Because it is not in a person sundered from us; it is in our Head, in One to whom we are united by a strait bond of union (better “by a legal and vital bond of union”), therefore are they reputed as one.” (Thomas Manton, 1670).

“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30). To be “in Christ” is to be *united* to Him: first electively (Eph. 1:4), when God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. Second, representatively (1 Cor. 15:22), as we were in Adam. Third, vitally (2 Cor. 5:17), as a branch in the vine. Fourth, voluntarily (Rom. 8:1), by faith cleaving unto Him. Of this compound union we are taught two things here in 1 Corinthians 1:30: its origin and its effects. As to its origin, it is “of God,” He alone being the efficient cause. As to its effects, because the saints are one with Christ, they *participate* in His benefits, and so He is “made unto us wisdom” etc.

Because of our union with Christ we are “accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6). We have the same title to enter God’s presence that Christ has: “*by His own blood* He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:12), “having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest *by the blood of Jesus*” (Heb. 10:19)! Because of our union with Christ we have not only a valid title or right to draw nigh unto God, but a personal *fitness*: “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath *made us meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12). Our very life is “hid *with Christ* in God” (Col. 3:3), so that before we can perish, He must perish. What is yet more blessed, the Father loves us as He loves Christ: “That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me” (John 17:23).

“Christ is His Father’s Son, and believers are Christ’s sons: (Isa. 8:18). He is the Father’s delight (Isa. 42:1), they are Christ’s: Psalm 16:3. He is the Father’s glory (Heb. 1:3), and they are Christ’s: 2 Corinthians 8:23. God is Christ’s Head (1 Cor. 11:3), Christ is their Head: 1 Corinthians 11:3. God always hears Christ (John 11:42), and Christ them: John 15. All power is given to Christ (Matt.

28:18), and by Christ to them: Philippians 4:13. God has committed all judgment to Christ (John 5:22), Christ makes them His assessors: 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3” (D. Clarkson, 1685).

The oneness of Christ and His people is manifested in intimate and precious fellowship together. The whole of Solomon’s “Song” sets forth this union and communion in a most wonderful and blessed way. Observe by what endearing terms the Saviour calls His Church: “Thou hast ravished My heart, my Sister, my Spouse” (4:9) —she is His “sister” as well as His “spouse,” for by taking her into union with Himself, this brings the Church into *every* relation: the saints are His “sons” (Heb. 2:10), His “brethren” (Heb. 2:12), and compare Matthew 12:48. The Divine Bridegroom says to His wife, “*eat*, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved” (5:1); and she says, “Let my beloved come into His garden, and *eat* His pleasant fruits” (4:16): there is sweet entertainment on both sides. They are mutually charmed with each other’s beauty: He says, “Behold, thou art fair, My love” (4:1); she exclaims, “my Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand” (5:10).

The precious intimacy of that union which exists between Christ and His people is manifested in many Scriptures. “If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, *and he with Me*” (Rev. 3:20): there is *mutual* communion, reciprocal affections. Christ and His saints are fond of hearing each other’s voices: “let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely” (Song. 2:14). That is Christ speaking to His spouse; her response is, “the companions hearken to Thy voice: cause me to hear it” (8:13). There are also mutual complaints between them: “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” (Rev. 2:4); “LORD, why castest Thou off my soul? Why hidest Thou Thy face from me?” (Psa. 88:14). O that both writer and reader may be favoured with more intimate and constant communion with the eternal Lover of our souls: “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Let us now seek to define and describe a little more closely the *nature* of that union which exists between Christ and His Church.

1. It is *supernatural*, being altogether beyond the powers of the

creature to effectuate. It is wholly of the wisdom, grace, and power of God. All the unions we have in the natural world come infinitely short of this. The union of the body and soul in man puzzles and baffles the greatest philosophers, but the union of Christ and His Church is a far greater mystery: that persons so distant, so divided, should be made one, is a profundity which no finite intelligence can fully comprehend. We had known nothing whatever about it if God had not revealed it to us in His Word, and even now we discern it “through a glass darkly.”

2. It is a *real* union, not a mere theoretical or fantastic thing, a creature of the imagination. Though it cannot be perceived by our senses, nor visualized by the mind, it is not a mere theological fiction. It is plainly and expressly affirmed in many Scriptures, under a great variety of expressions, all of which are too clear to be misunderstood. As actually as the limbs of the body are united to their head, the wife to the husband, the branches to the root, so truly are the saints united to Christ and Christ to them. Take this away and the whole of Christianity collapses. Is not the union between God the Father and God the Son a *real* one? then so is this: John 17:22: the one is as much a verity as the other.

3. It is *spiritual*. The great design and the grand aim of God in His purpose and dealings with the elect is the communication to them of the benefits of Christ; but all communication of benefits implies communion, and all communion necessarily presupposes *union* with His Person. Not that there is any confusion or transfusing of the Christian’s person with Christ’s Person, but a real and personal conjunction between them. That conjunction is not a gross, fleshly, corporeal union, but a mystical, spiritual, and inward one. The nature of this union is seen in the *bond* of it: it is entirely spiritual—the Spirit in Christ, faith in us. The husband and the wife are “one flesh” (Eph. 5:31), but “he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17).

4. It is *intimate*, far closer than that existing between the branches and root of a tree, or that between husband and wife. The union between Christ and His people is so near that we know not how to conceive it, still less express it. We may borrow some light here and there from the different unions in nature, but they all, in point of

nearness, fall far short of it. Believers are so united to the Lord as to be “one spirit”—what an expression is that! What could be spoken higher! so intimate is this oneness that in a coming day Christ will say, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto *Me*” (Matt. 25:40). So near are the saints to Christ, they are a part of Him, so that He would be *incomplete* without them—they are His “fullness” (Eph. 1:23).

5. It is *indissoluble*. The oneness between Christ and His Church is such that it cannot be broken. All the powers of Satan cannot destroy that union. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom. 8:35). “Ye *shall* abide in Him” (1 John 2:27). It is an inseparable, insuperable union. Death itself, though it break all other unions, does not and cannot put an end to or reach this. “Blessed are the dead which die *in* the Lord” (Rev. 14:13); “absent from the body, and to be present *with* the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8)! And this union pertains to *all* the redeemed: the least as well as the greatest Christian, the humblest as well as the highest, is *equally* united to Christ and participates in what belongs to Him.

Union with Christ *in glory* is the goal toward which we are now moving, but at present we enjoy *experimental* union with Him in grace. But experimental union with Christ is only possible as there is a *practical* union with Him, *for* “can two walk together except they be agreed?” Practical union with Christ presupposes a *saving* one, whereby the heart is wedded to Christ in faith and love. That, in turn, necessitates a *vital* union, for only as quickened by the Spirit and made one with Christ can any sinner savingly believe unto Him. And that again denotes a *mystical* and eternal union, for the Spirit quickens none save those who had a covenant-oneness with Christ before the foundation of the world. Nor could there ever have been *any* union between the Creator and the creature but for the *mediatorial* union, whereby the Son united our nature to His own ineffable Person. And the foundation of *that* was the *Divine* union, the three Persons in one God. The Lord willing, by His enabling, we shall seek to contemplate separately each of these unions in the chapters [booklets] which follow, taking them up in their inverse order.

2. Divine Union.

That which we shall seek to contemplate in this chapter [booklet] is the revelation which God has made of Himself in His inspired Word. This ineffable subject is one which we must ever approach with bowed heads and reverent hearts, for the ground which we are to tread is indeed holy. The subject is transcendently sacred, for it is concerned with the infinite and majestic Jehovah. It is one of surpassing importance, for it is the foundation of all spiritual knowledge and faith. For any real light thereon, we are entirely shut up to what God has made known of Himself in His Word. Neither observation, science or philosophy can, in this exalted sphere, advance our knowledge one iota. We can know no more thereon except what is set forth in Holy Writ, and that must be approached with the deepest humility and reverence, with the earnest prayer, "that which I see not teach Thou me" (Job 34:32).

It is not sufficient to think of God as He may be conceived of in our imagination; instead, our thoughts of Him must be formed by what He has revealed of Himself in His Word. Man, unaided, cannot rightly conceive of God: all speculation concerning Him is utterly vain, yea, profane. The finite cannot comprehend the Infinite. If the "judgments" of God are "unsearchable" and if His "ways" are "past finding out," how much more so must God Himself be! Even creation cannot fully teach us what God is, because no work is able to perfectly express the worker thereof. The heathen have creation spread before them, but what do they know of *God!* The ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, sought to delve deeply into the marvels and mysteries of "Nature," but with all their boasted wisdom the Deity was to them "the unknown God!"

It is of vast importance to the souls of God's believing people that they should have clear, spiritual, and Divine knowledge of the true and living God: without a scriptural acquaintance of the same, we are left without the very supports which are indispensable to found our faith upon. It is impossible to over-emphasize the momentousness of our present theme, for the truth thereon will alone direct us in worshipping God aright. If a person has

erroneous thoughts of Deity, then he worships a false god and renders homage to a fictitious being, the figment of his own imagination. “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3): that is unspeakably blessed; it is likewise unspeakably solemn—the man who knows not the “only true God” is destitute of eternal life!

Now as we turn to and examine the Holy Scriptures we are at once impressed with their repeated and uniform emphasis upon the *unity* of God. In contrast from the polytheism (many gods) of the heathen, we read, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is *one* LORD” (Deut. 6:4), and, as we have seen above, “this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the *only* true God.” There can be but one infinite, self-existent Spirit, who reveals Himself as the great “I am,” from whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. To think of two, or more, independent and supreme Beings, would be to suppose a contradiction in terms, an utter impossibility. There can be but one *God*, with sovereign authority over all the works and creatures of His hands, having but one plan and a single administration. Such is indeed the teaching of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

But as we continue our examination of what God has revealed of Himself in His Holy Word, it is not long before we reach that which is profoundly mysterious, for side by side with its continuous emphasis on the *unity* of God it also reveals *three* distinct Divine Persons, namely, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Here we come to an infinite depth which we have no means of sounding, for while the Scriptures are unmistakably clear in their presentation of three Divine Persons; nevertheless they are equally express in denying that there are three Gods. Though no attempt whatever is made in Scripture to explain this mystery, it is unmistakable in affirming it: in affirming that God is an absolute Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; and all who refuse to bow to and acknowledge this ineffable truth must be eternally damned.

The incomprehensible nature of the truth which is now before us, so far from providing a valid motive for its rejection, supplies a most powerful argument for its being formally received. For if this truth be so sublime and mysterious, that even when revealed, it

infinitely surpasses the feeble grasp of our finite powers, then it is very evident that it could never have been invented by men! What human wisdom cannot comprehend, human policy could never have proposed. It *must* have had some higher projector, and therefore the conclusion is unavoidable: in God alone we behold an adequate cause. “This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working” (Isa. 28:29).

The first great truth, then, which is presented to faith—the foundation of everything—is the fact of the one living, eternal, and true God; and this we know not by any discovery of reason, but because He has Himself revealed it to our hearts through His Word. The next great truth is that the one living and true God has revealed Himself to us under the threefold relation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and this we know upon the same authority as the first. Both of these sublime truths are above reason yet their very transcendency so far from stumbling us, is a necessary condition of our confidence in the Scriptures and our faith in Him who is there revealed. Had the Scriptures professed to present a revelation of God which had no heights beyond our powers to scale, and no depth too deep for mental acumen to fathom, the writer for one would promptly spurn them as the invention of man. Personally, I would no more worship a God that my intellect could measure, than I would an idol which my hands had manufactured.

“Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and *become as little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:2, 3). A hard lesson for proud man to learn is that, yet it *must be* learned (by grace) if any entrance is to be had into the things of God. It is at *this* point we may perceive one of the radical differences between the regenerate and unregenerate: *faith receives* what reason is unable to grasp. “Great God, I desire to fall down under the deepest self-abasement, in the consciousness of my own nothingness and ignorance before Thee! I bless the Lord for that degree of information He hath been pleased to give of Himself, while here below. It is enough! O for grace, ‘to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ Colossians 2:2,

3” (Robert Hawker, 1810)—such is the language of every renewed heart.

Though the doctrine or truth of the Divine Trinity is properly speaking a “mystery,” that affords no ground whatever for it to be disparaged by us. Some people seem to suppose that by the term “mystery,” reference is made to something of which they can at best form only a vague notion, that it pertains to the sphere of half-perceived shadows, in relation to which certainty is impossible, and that it has no *practical* connection with the solid elements of knowledge and real life. This is a great mistake. The word “mystery” in Scripture is applied to that which cannot be discovered by human reason, or arrived at by any speculation, but which can only be made known by *Divine revelation*, and which can only be perceived so far as God has been pleased to unveil it. Just so far as spiritual “mysteries” *have been* disclosed by God, they become part of the real and solid knowledge of those by whom that revelation is humbly received.

It is in the Gospel that the three Persons in the Godhead are most clearly revealed, and Their respective activities in the saving of the elect are most fully made known. “The Gospel represents *God the Father* as sovereign Lord of heaven and earth: as righteous Governor of the world: as giving laws to His creatures; as revealing His wrath against all transgressions. He is represented as being injured and offended by our sins, and concerned to maintain the honour of His majesty, of His Law and government, and sacred authority. He is represented as having designs of mercy towards a sinful, guilty, ruined world; and as contriving and proposing a method of recovery. He is represented as one seated on a throne of grace, reconciling the world unto Himself by Christ, ordering pardon and peace to be proclaimed to any and all who will return to Him in the way prescribed.

“The Gospel represents *God the Son* as being constituted Mediator by His Father, that in and by Him He might open a way to accomplish His designs of mercy towards a guilty world, consistent with the honour of His majesty, of His holiness and justice, of His Law and government. His Father appointed Him to the office, and He freely undertook it. His Father sent Him into this world to enter

upon the difficult work, and He willingly came: ‘He was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’ Here He lived, and here He died, in the capacity of a Mediator. He arose, He ascended into Heaven, and sits now at His Father’s right hand, God-man Mediator, exalted to the highest honour; made Lord of all things, and Judge of the world. And now we are to have access to God by Him, as our Mediator, High Priest, Intercessor, and Advocate, who has made complete atonement for sins in the days of His abasement, and has now sufficient interest in the court of Heaven.

“The Gospel represents *God the Holy Spirit* as being sent of the Father as prime Agent, and by the Son as Mediator, in the character of an enlightener and sanctifier, in order to bring sinners effectually to see and be made sensible of their sin, guilt, and ruin; to believe the Gospel, to trust in Christ, and to return home to God through Him. It is His office to dwell in believers; to teach and lead them; to sanctify, strengthen, comfort, and keep them through faith unto salvation.

“The Father is God by nature, and God by office. The Son is God by nature, and Mediator by office. The Spirit is God by nature, and Sanctifier by office. The Father as Governor, Law-Giver, and Avenger, has all power in Heaven and earth, in and of Himself: Matthew 11:25. The Son as Mediator derives all His authority from the Father: Matthew 11:27. The Holy Spirit acts as being sent by them Both: John 14:16. The Father maintains the honour of the Godhead and of His government, displaying His grace while ordaining that sin should be punished, the sinner humbled, and brought back to God and into subjection into His will. Sin is punished in the Son as Mediator, standing in the room of the guilty. The sinner is humbled and brought into subjection to God’s will by the Holy Spirit. Thus the Son and the Spirit honour the Father as supreme Governor, and all join in the same design to discountenance sin, humble the sinner, and glorify grace” (Joseph Bellamy, 1780).

By affirming that the three Divine Persons are more clearly revealed in the Gospel than elsewhere, it is *not* to be understood that the Old Testament saints were left in ignorance of this blessed and foundation truth. That could not be, or otherwise it had been

impossible for them to know God, or to worship Him intelligently and acceptably. God must be *revealed* before He can (in any measure) be known, and He must be *known* in the distinctions of His Persons, before He can be loved and adored. Those who find it hard to conceive of the Old Testament saints possessing a clear evangelical knowledge of the mystery of the Trinity, create their own difficulty by supposing the Gospel is peculiar to the New Testament dispensation. This is a serious mistake. Hebrews 4:2 declares, “For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto *them*”—that is, unto Israel in the wilderness: see the closing verses of Hebrews 3. To go back further still, Galatians 3:8 tells us, that God, “preached before *the Gospel* unto Abraham.”

The glorious truth of the three Persons in the Godhead is to be found as definitely and as frequently in the Old Testament as it is in the New.

On the very first page of Holy Writ it is recorded, “And God said, Let *US* make man in *OUR* image, after *OUR* likeness” (Gen. 1:26): how clearly do the plural pronouns there reveal the fact that there is *more* than one Person in the Godhead! Nor is Genesis 1:26 by any means the only passage in the Old Testament where the plural pronoun is used of God. After Adam had fallen, we find Him saying, “Behold, the man is become as one of *Us*, to know good and evil” (Gen. 3:22)—probably that was the language of irony: God’s answer to the Serpent’s lie in 3:5. Again, in response to the impiety of those who had said, “Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven” (Gen 11:4), the Lord said, “Go to, let *Us* go down, and there confound their language” (Gen. 11:7).

Once more, in that marvellous vision granted unto Isaiah, wherein he saw the Lord “seated upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple,” before whom the seraphim veiled their faces, the Prophet “heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall *I* send, and who will go for *Us*?” (Isa. 6:8). Very wonderful is that “*I*” and “*Us*,” intimating the Divine unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity. It is striking to note that the employment of this plural pronoun in connection with the Godhead, as it is consecrated by the Spirit of truth in use with the Persons in the Divine Essence, is employed by *Each* of Them to each other. By the Father in Genesis

1:26—compare with Ephesians 3:9, the Father being the *Creator* “by Jesus Christ;” by the Son in Genesis 11:7, for to Him all *judgment* is committed (John 5:22); by the Spirit in Isaiah 6:8, see Acts 28:26 and compare with 13:2!

The Hebrew *noun* is in the plural number in each of these verses: “Remember now thy *Creators* in the days of thy youth” (Eccl. 12:1); “For thy *Makers* are thine Husband” (Isa. 54:5); “Let the children of Zion be joyful in their *Kings*” (Psa. 149:2); “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the *Holy Ones* is understanding” (Prov. 9:10)—according to the rule of Hebrew parallelism, it is obvious that “Holy Ones” is exegetical of “Jehovah.” Surely there is more than a hint of the Divine Trinity in the benediction of Numbers 6:24-26, “*The LORD* bless thee, and keep thee: *the LORD* make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: *the LORD* lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” Also in the “Holy, holy, holy” of the seraphim in Isaiah 6:3. In Isaiah 48:16 we hear the Messiah saying, “Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the (1). Lord GOD, and (2). His Spirit, hath sent (3). Me.” “So *the Spirit* took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of *the LORD* filled the house. And I heard *Him* speaking unto me out of the house; and *the Man* stood by me” (Ezek. 43:5, 6). While the Prophet was adoring the manifest glory of God, the Spirit conducted him into the inner chamber, while beside him stood the One who had been instructing him—“The Man:” see 40:3. Thus the Prophet had a vision of the three Persons in the Godhead, manifesting in different ways Their presence with him.

A plurality of Persons in the Godhead was also indicated in such passages as, “Then *the LORD* rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire *from the LORD* out of heaven” (Gen. 19:24); “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at My right hand” (Psa. 110:1); “And *the LORD* said unto Satan, *The LORD* rebuke thee” (Zech. 3:2). “Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith *the LORD* of hosts: *the Word* that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so *My Spirit* remaineth among you” (Hag. 2:4, 5). The first Person in

the sacred Trinity was known to the Old Testament saints as *the Father*: from a number of passages we select the following, “But now, O LORD, Thou art our Father” (Isa. 64:8). The second Person in the Trinity was revealed as *the Son*: “The LORD hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son” (Psa. 2:7), and also as *the Word*: “By *The Word of the LORD* were the heavens made” (Psa. 33:6) and compare with Genesis 15:1 and 1 Kings 19:9 where the essential and personal “Word” is in view. The third Person in the Trinity was revealed as *The Holy Spirit*: “The Spirit of the LORD” (1 Sam. 16:13).

“Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and show *Us* what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that *We* may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare *Us* things for to come” (Isa. 41:21, 22). A truly remarkable passage is that; with it may be compared, “If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and *We* will come unto him, and make *Our* abode with him” (John 14:23). “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isa. 57:15): the “high and lofty *One*”—one in the inseparable unity of the Divine Essence; “that inhabiteth eternity”—thus distinguished from all creatures; “dwelling in the high and lofty place”—true of the Father (1 Kings 8:27), of the Son (Jer. 23:24—see verse 6), of the Spirit (Psa. 139:7, 8); *indwelling His people*—true of the Father (2 Cor. 6:16, 18), of the Son (Col. 1:27), of the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).

The title “Jehovah”—applied to the Father (Psa. 110:1), the Son (Jer. 23:6), and the Holy Spirit (2 Sam. 23:2)—is *always* in the *singular* number, having no plural form, being expressive of the Unity of the Divine nature. Yet we frequently find it employed with the plural “Elohim” (God), and with plural pronouns and verbs—a thing which could never have been done consistent with the laws of grammar, except for the purpose of proving thereby, what all the parts of Scripture concur in, that Jehovah though but One in the essence of the Godhead, is nevertheless existing at the same time in a plurality or trinity of Persons. That the great God should subsist in

a way *entirely different* and perfectly distinguished from all His creatures in a trinity of Persons in the unity of His essence should not stagger us, but should bow our hearts before Him in adoring wonder and worship.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Deut. 6:4). This very verse which is quoted so much by “Unitarians,” in their hatred of the blessed truth which we are here endeavouring to set forth, would be quite meaningless were there no Trinity of Persons in the Godhead. It is self-evident that there is no need whatever for any *Divine revelation* to teach us that *one is one*: had this text meant nothing more than that, it had been superfluous information. But inasmuch as “Elohim” (God) is in the plural number, it *was* necessary for the Deity to make known unto His people that the three Divine Persons are but *one* “Lord” or Jehovah. That Israel apprehended (in some measure, at any rate) this mystery of the great One in Three, is strikingly manifested by the fact that when Aaron made the single golden calf, the people addressed it in the *plural* number: “These be thy *gods*, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exod. 32:4)!

Right views of the Divine Being and Character lie at the foundation of all genuine and vital godliness. It should, then, be our supreme quest to seek after the knowledge of God. Without the true knowledge of Him, in His nature, Persons, attributes, we can neither worship Him acceptably nor serve Him aright. The *unity* of the Godhead is an essential part of His character. The God whom the Scriptures command us to adore and serve, love and obey, is the one only living and true God. There cannot be but *one* First Cause of all things, absolutely, independent, necessarily existent, and infinite in all perfections. But this one God subsists in a *threefold*, though to us incomprehensible, manner. Though He is one simple, undivided essence, yet in the mode of His existence He subsists in three Persons. Incomprehensible as this is, yet it is no more so than as *uncaused* and eternal existence: God is infinitely above all creatures, and exists in a manner peculiar to Himself.

This truth of three Persons in the Godhead is basic, being essential to the very scheme of Salvation itself, and it has been accounted the catholic doctrine of the whole Christian Church in all

ages. In Scripture, the work of our salvation is represented as engaging the *joint-agency* of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God *the Father* it was who, in infinite wisdom planned the amazing scheme, providing Himself a Lamb to purge away sin. God *the Son*, in His own Person, executed the plan, by submitting to be “delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.” God *the Spirit* secures an effectual reception of this scheme of salvation, sanctifying the souls of the elect unto eternal happiness, in which it finally issues.

Each of these sacred Persons, who thus co-operate in our salvation, must of necessity be really and truly *God*, for none less could possibly execute any part of that grand scheme. Who, but the supreme Lord Himself, could admit an innocent Substitute to become Surety for criminals and bear their curse! What being *beneath* the dignity of Deity could possibly offer a satisfaction of infinite sufficiency to the Divine government, possessing such merits that, by obeying and suffering the penalty of the law, full atonement should be made for all innumerable offences committed against the Majesty of Heaven by the entire election of grace! And unto whom beside God Himself, the eternal and blessed Holy Spirit, doth such power belong as to change the darkness of human depravity into ineffable light, subdue rebellious wills, and bring them into loving obedience unto the Lord!

All that pertains to salvation is the gift of the Father, through the incarnate Son, by the Holy Spirit: and it is inexpressibly blessed to find in so many Scriptures how *all* the Persons in the Godhead are individually as well as unitedly concerned in the grand matter of the Church’s redemption. This ought ever to be viewed as the standard of orthodoxy. Whatever is presented from pulpit or press which does not give *equal* place and ascribe equal honour to *each* of the Eternal Three is the doctrine of demons. There is not a vestige of real “Christianity” where this foundation truth of the Trinity is not known, acknowledged, and magnified. Nor is there a vestige of true piety in any heart where the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit do not dwell. Furthermore, it is not possible to obtain a clear and full view of any doctrine of the Word, unless the telescope of this transcendent truth be applied to the eye of faith and be viewed

through it.

Now if the Holy Scriptures be so plain and full in declaring in the interposition and operations of each Person in the blessed Trinity in the work of our salvation, it must of necessity be the bounden duty as well as the precious privilege of each Christian to pay a becoming attention to and endeavour by devout meditation and prayerful searching of the Word, to get impressed on his mind and heart what God has revealed on the subject. It most certainly behooves each one of us to spare no pains in endeavouring to attain unto a full spiritual knowledge of how the Divine Three stand related to us, how They are severally interested in us, and what we are to expect from Them. This will lead us to render unto Each Divine Person that honour and praise, that loving obedience, which is His distinctive due. For “this is life eternal, that they might *know Thee* the only true God” (John 17:3).

“The knowledge of God here spoken of, must include in it such a knowledge of the Holy Trinity as is revealed in the blessed gospel. The divine persons in their essential and distinctive relation to each other, and to us, must be so far known as to be believed, and acknowledged by us. The truth of their existence (not the knowledge of their subsisting in the infinite essence), is most essential to the being and to the well-being of our faith. As also how they are related unto us, and have acted for us in the everlasting covenant, in and by which they are and have revealed themselves to be the Lord our God. To know the Father, to be our Father in Christ Jesus, that He hath loved with an everlasting love, is life eternal. To know the Son, as one with the Father, of the same essence with the Father, and that He was set up to be God-man, from everlasting, this is life eternal. To know the Holy Spirit, to be personally distinct from the Father and the Son, yet of the same essence, glory, perfections and blessedness with the Father and the Son, is life eternal” (S.E. Pierce).

A distinction in the Divine nature inconceivable by us, but plainly revealed in Holy Writ, must be acknowledged by us on the all-sufficient testimony of Him who alone can instruct us in what we are concerned to know of His ineffable essence and being. “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and

the Holy Spirit: and these three *are one*" (1 John 5:7). To each of these three Persons the perfections of Deity are attributed and ascribed in hundreds of passages of Scripture. Each of Them, therefore, is *God*, and yet it is equally clear that there is but *one* Jehovah. Nor is there the slightest ground for us to demur in the face of this insuperable and insoluble mystery. "Let us first if we can, account for the nature, essence, and properties of the things with which, as to their effects, we are familiarly acquainted. Let us *explain* the growth of a blade of grass, or the virtues of the lodestone. Till we are able to do *this*, it becomes us to lay our hands upon our mouths, and our mouths in the dust" (John Newton).

A plurality of Persons does *not* mean that the Godhead is divided, so that the Father is *one part of* deity, the Son another part, and the Spirit still a third part. "The Divine *nature* IS the Godhead, simply and absolutely considered; a *person* is that which subsisteth IN the Godhead, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (W. Perkins, 1595). It is the Divine Persons in the union of the Divine Essence which are to be distinguished, and not the Essence itself. Jehovah is to be worshipped as a Unity in Trinity, and a Trinity in Unity: one God is to be acknowledged in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When Scripture is compared with Scripture it is plain to be seen that the Divine Unity is *not* a unity of Persons, but of nature and essence. Though there are three in the Godhead, who are dignified with the incommunicable name of Jehovah, possessing *the same* attributes and perfections and entitled to the same adoration, yet Holy Writ does not exhibit a plurality of Deities.

That each of the Eternal Three partakes of the one Divine Essence is proved by Their names. Each is called "God:" the Father in Hebrews 1:1, the Son in Hebrews 1:8, the Spirit in Acts 5:4—see verse 3. Each of them is designated "Jehovah:" the Father is Psalm 110:1, the Son in Psalm 23:1, the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 11:2. Each of them is denominated "The Living God:" the Father in Matthew 16:16, the Son in Hebrews 3:12 and 1 Timothy 4:10, the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 6:16—compare with 1 Corinthians 3:16. Each of them is addressed as "The Almighty:" the Father in 2 Corinthians 6:18, the Son in Revelation 16:7, the Spirit in Job 32:8. Each of them is set forth as a "Fountain:" the Father in Jeremiah 2:13, the Son in

Zechariah 13:1, the Spirit in John 7:38. In Ephesians 1:17 the first Person is termed “the Father of Glory;” in James 2:1 the second Person is termed “the Lord of Glory,” while in 1 Peter 4:14 the third Person is termed “the Spirit of Glory.”

That these three names—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—are *not* so many diverse titles for one and the same august Person, but instead, belong to three distinct but equally Divine Persons, is clear from the fact that in Scripture they are frequently represented as *speaking to one another*. Thus, in the second Psalm the Messiah declares, “The LORD hath said *unto* (not “of”) Me, Thou art my Son . . . *Ask of Me*, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance” (verses 7, 8). In the fortieth Psalm the Son is heard speaking *to* the Father, saying “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within My heart” (verses 7, 8). In the forty-fifth Psalm the Father says to His Son, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre” (verse 6). And again in the hundred-tenth Psalm, “The LORD *said unto* my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool” (verse 1). What could possibly set forth more clearly the distinction of Persons in the Godhead!

Earlier we called attention to a number of passages in the Old Testament where the Eternal Three are all mentioned together: the same blessed phenomenon is presented again and again in the New Testament. “When the (1). Comforter is come, whom (2). I will send unto you from (3). the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of Me” (John 15:26). “I beseech you, brethren, for (1). the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for (2). the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers (3). to God” (Rom. 15:30). “For through Him (Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. 2:18). “To the acknowledgment of the mystery of God (the Spirit), and of the Father, and of Christ” (Col. 2:2). “The Lord (the Spirit) direct your hearts into the love of God (the Father), and into the patient waiting for Christ” (2 Thess. 3:5). “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).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). In the name of the Triune God believers are to be baptized. What a conclusive confirmation of the blessed doctrine of the Holy Trinity is this! Here are three Divine Persons, but with *one* “Name”—note carefully it is not “names!” The absolute Deity of the Son and of the Spirit are here unmistakably intimated by their conjunction with the Father, since baptism is administered *equally* in the name of all Three as a religious ordinance, yea, as a part of Divine worship, which could never be were either of the Three merely a creature. Not only is there a profession of faith in the three Divine Persons made by those who are scripturally baptized, but there is a solemn dedication unto Their service and worship, being laid under obligation of obedience unto Each.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God (the Father), and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all” (2 Cor. 13:14). This passage contains another clear proof of a trinity of Persons in the Godhead, for here distinct things are ascribed and of Them asked, as *equal Objects* of prayer and worship. That comprehensive benediction includes all the prime blessings and benefits of redemption: the “grace” of our adorable Saviour, the “love” of our heavenly Father, and the “communion” of our Divine Comforter. Unto what wretched shifts are the enemies of the Truth put, who would reduce the meaning of this verse unto “the grace of a *creature* and the love of the *Creator* be joined with the communion of *an energy* of Deity, be with you all!” Unspeakably solemn is 1 John 2:23, “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father:” a denial of the Trinity is a repudiation of the Deity of the Son and the Spirit, and he who is guilty of that most awful sin knows not, hath not “the Father!” In denying *one* they equally deny *all*.

“And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in

whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:16, 17). Let it be carefully observed here were presented all three Persons of the Godhead, clearly distinguished from each other and manifested severally, and that, in such a way and manner as is needed to define the Persons of Each. Here was the Person of the Father, manifested by a voice from Heaven. Here was the Person of the Son, manifested in our nature, coming up from the water. Here was the Person of the Holy Spirit manifested in the form of a dove, lighting upon the Son. What could more clearly distinguish the Eternal Three—the Father speaking, the Son spoken of, and the Spirit manifested apart from Both! Forever be His name praised that the Triune God there so gloriously revealed Himself.

Not only are the Eternal Three in one God plainly revealed in Scripture in their distinctive personalities, but Their *absolute equality* One with the Other is also clearly made known. It would extend this unto too great a length were we to present a small part of the proof that each One is possessed of the same Divine perfections, and quote some of the texts which affirm that Father, Son and Spirit are alike eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Instead, we will here simply point out how Their equality is evidenced by the *order* in which They are mentioned in various Scriptures. In Matthew 28:19 it is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In 2 Corinthians 13:14 it is the Son, the Father, and the Spirit. In Ephesians 4:4 it is the Spirit, the Son, and the Father. In Colossians 2:2 it is the Spirit, the Father, and the Son. In Revelation 1:4, 5 it is the Father, the Spirit, and the Son. What could more definitely intimate Their equality than this *variation* of order!

Infidels have sought to turn into ridicule the fact of Christ praying to the Father, arguing that if both were Divine and there be only one God, then God was praying to Himself. In this they betray their ignorance, failing to discern the distinctions in the Godhead: though the Divine Essence be one, there is a distinction of Persons in the undivided nature. “The language of *I* and *Thou*, and *Me* and *Thee*, so often used by Christ in John 17, are so many proofs of the Divine personalities of Himself and of the Father. The word personalities is expressive of the mode of existing in the Divine nature. The word person, besides that, implies the nature and substance in whom He

subsists. A person is an individual that subsists and lives of itself, endowed with will and understanding, who is neither sustained by, nor is part of another. Such is the Father, therefore a Person; such is the Son, therefore a Person; such is the Holy Spirit, therefore a Person. The great and incommunicable name of Jehovah is always in the singular number, because it is expressive of His essence, which is but one; but the first name we meet with in the first verse of Scripture is plural” (S.E. Pierce).

Scripture does not present the doctrine of the sacred Trinity in any way of contradiction, and affirms that God is one and three, three and one, in the *same* manner: instead, it reveals that God is one in *nature*, but three in His *Persons*. When Christ said “I and (My) Father are one” (John 10:30), He signified one in nature, not one in Person. The word “God” is sometimes expressive of the Divine Essence, and sometimes of one of the Persons in that Essence. The three Persons are one in substance, one in the depths of a common consciousness, one in purpose, and with absolute equality in power and glory. “They agree with one another in nature, being, life, time, dignity, glory, or anything else pertaining to the Divine Essence: for in all these They are one and the same, and consequently co-essential, co-equal, co-eternal” (J. Usher, 1640).

The Divine Persons are not only one, but they are *in* one Another: “As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee” (John 17:21)—there is an intimate inhabitation without any confusion of the three Subsistences. They enjoy perfect, absolute, and Divine union and communion with Each Other. In the Scriptures we hear Them speaking *to* Each Other, and *of* Each Other in such a way as to clearly show a distinction of Persons, while constituting one Jehovah in the indivisible Essence of the Godhead. The ineffable union between the Eternal Three is such that Each One is *in* and *with* the Others; Each One loves, possesses, glories, in the Other, and works the same thing. “The Father loveth the Son” (John 3:35); “the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” (John 5:19); “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?” (John 14:10).

“The union of the Trinity in Godhead is an essential one. There

can be no greater unity. Nothing can be more one than the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one. Yet it is a unity which consists with order and distinction: the Unity of the Trinity does not take away the distinction of the Persons, nor confuse Their order. They are one, yet three. They keep Their distinct Personalities, and Their distinct Personal operations, and Their different manner and order of acting. It is an eternal and inseparable union, for in the Divine nature or Essence there can be no change. It is from the unity of the Persons in the same Essence ariseth their essential Inbeing in Each Other. All the Persons having the same Essence and being in the one Essence, it follows that in respect of the Essence, one Person is as Another.

“The great and incomprehensible God is essentially and infinitely holy, happy, blessed, and glorious. His nature is a fountain of infinite perfection. He is life itself, eternity itself, love itself, and blessedness itself. His happiness arises from the knowledge which He hath of His own essential nature, Persons and perfections. Nothing can be added unto Him, for ‘of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things’ (Rom. 11:36). From the in-being, society, and mutual intercourse held between the Eternal Three in the one Jehovah, flows that life of joy and bliss which belongs to God alone. The essential union between the Persons in the Eternal Godhead is incommunicable, and the communion which They had from everlasting with Each Other is incomprehensible. Yet we may venture to say, Their communion consisteth in the eternal life of the three Persons among Themselves, in the common interests and propriety which They have in Each Other, in reciprocal affections, communion and enjoyment; in an equal knowledge of Each Other; in an alternate communication of Each Other’s mind in mutual love and delight, and in Their possession of one common glory and blessedness.

“There is an incomprehensible love borne by the Three in Jehovah to Each Other: it is a part of Their essential perfection and blessedness. Whilst the Scripture is not altogether silent on this most sublime truth, yet it speaks but sparingly of it, because it exceeds all created conceptions; it can no more be comprehended than the life and self-sufficiency of Jehovah can. Yet, as in the order

in which the Essential Three exist and co-exist in the incomprehensible Jehovah, They have been pleased to make known and manifest Their Personalities in all Their eternal, internal and external acts of grace in election, regeneration, sanctification, preservation and eternal glorification. So Their love to Each Other is intimated in those distinct displays of grace which are attributed to Each of Them in the sacred Word. It is expressly said, ‘The Father loveth the Son’ (John 3:35), ‘I love the Father’ (John 14:31). And from the co-equality of the Father, Son and Spirit, in the Essence or Godhead, and from the unity of the Holy Ones in the whole revelation of grace, it is evident that the Spirit loves the Father and the Son” (S.E. Pierce, 1810).

Thus we have sought to begin with the highest and most glorious of all: the union of the Eternal Three. It is the union of distinct Persons in the unity of a single nature. It is an union which is absolute, essential, eternal, incomprehensible, ineffable. It is not only futile, but grossly impious, to attempt any *illustration* of it, for there exists *no* analogy in all the universe. GOD is unique! But though profoundly mysterious, every truly regenerated soul has *proof of this truth* in his own inward experience. He knows that he has access through Christ, by the Spirit unto the Father. He knows that the Man who has saved him from Hell is indwelt by “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” He knows that the invincible power which subdued his enmity and caused him to throw down the weapons of his rebellion, was exercised by God the Spirit. And he knows that he has received the spirit of adoption whereby he cries “Abba, Father.”

The first of seven booklets.

