

## LECTURE XI.\*



James 2. 19.

*Thou believest that there is one God ; thou doest well :  
the devils also believe, and tremble.*

**I**N pursuance of that design we have had in hand, of explaining and asserting to you the principal heads and doctrines of our religion, we have (you know) already been discoursing to you about the Object of it, the eternal, ever-blessed God : and concerning the measure and rule of it, the holy Scriptures, which we have proved to be the word of God : and that method it was necessary to follow, of evincing the being or existence of God to you first, before we could reasonably go about to prove the Scriptures to be his word. For of nothing there are no predicates ; nothing can be affirmed of nothing. It were vain to allege the authority of this or that prince's edict to one that should not believe that there was ever such a prince : but having evinc'd to you the existence of God, and that these Scriptures are his word, purposely written to reveal him more fully to us, his nature and his mind and will concerning what we are to believe and practice, in order to our pleasing and our enjoying of him, it is now highly reasonable to expect from these Scriptures, the discovery of such things further, concerning him, and our duty towards him and expectations from him, as we could not otherwise have known, as whereof we could

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not by other means have had, as to some things; and as to other things not so distinct or certain knowledge: for otherwise these Scriptures should not answer their avowed end, and must indeed be supposed to be written in vain. There are things that do concern even God himself, which is of great importance to us to be acquainted with, that either we should have had no knowledge at all of, without these Scriptures, or should not have known so clearly or not so easily: some of us (it may be) not at all: such as were less capable, or less inclined, or less willing to use their own reason in thought, and to discern a train of consequences and the force of them, and how to make things that are in themselves evidencable, evident to ourselves in an argumentative way. It is a great matter of advantage to have more of necessary things made known to us, and to have those things which it is necessary we should know, made known in an easy and less laborious way, without our more toilsome search: or to have it said, on the authority of the great God, this and this you are to believe, and this and this you are to do; to have that which is to be the food of our souls, not to be hunted for, but even brought to our hands; this is a very great advantage.

Now among some of those things that do concern God himself, and which it is of absolute necessity to be acquainted with, and in order whereto, we are to have a clear light, and for the most, their whole light from the Scriptures, there are especially two which I shall instance in, and insist upon. That is,—the unity of the Godhead, and—the trinity therein. And for the former of these, the unity of the Godhead, we may very fitly insist upon that, as far as is needful, from this scripture. In which there are two parts. The first, approving and justifying the believing of this great truth, that God is but **ONE**: “Thou believest there is one God, thou doest well:” the other, reproving and condemning the ineffectual belief of it: “the devils also believe and tremble.”

I. I shall insist on the former of these—That the Godhead is but **ONE**, or there is but **ONE GOD**. “This (saith the apostle) thou believest, thou doest well in it. Thou believest truly and as the matter is.” I do not propound this to you as a Scripture doctrine, upon that account, as if it were not at all demonstrable in a rational way; but shall first, let you see how very expressly the Scripture doth testify to us this truth touching the unity of the Godhead. And then secondly, shall shew what rational evidence it admits of besides.

1. As to the Scripture testimony about this, it could be in nothing more express. “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is

one Lord:" (Deut. 6. 4.) a passage quoted in the gospel as you find, Mark 12. in several verses of that chapter, in which it is enlarged upon. One of the scribes (verse 28) came to our Lord; and perceiving there were reasonings between him and some others, he asks, "Which is the first commandment?" Jesus answered him, "The first commandment is, Hear O Israel; the Lord thy God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The scribe said unto him, "Well master, thou hath said the truth, for there is but one God, and there is none other but he; and to love him with all the heart, with all the understanding and with all the soul and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he answered discreetly; like a man that had a mind, (as the word signifies) had a presentness of mind, an understanding, a good sound understanding about him, he highly approves of what he said, and saith, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." There are many expressions very great and august, spoken like a God about this matter, in the prophecy of Isaiah, in several chapters of it. If you look to the 43. chapter, "Ye are my witnesses saith the Lord, and my servants whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me, and that ye may understand that I am he; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I am the Lord; and besides me there is no Saviour." Verses 10, 11. And in the 44th chap. ver. 8. "Fear ye not, neither be afraid; have I not told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are my witnesses, is there a God besides me? yea there is no God, I know not any." "I that can transmit the beams of mine eye through this vast and boundless inane, and look round about me every where, can see nothing like another God in view: I know no such, and I know you cannot know more than I." So you have the same thing inculcated in the 45th chapter, in sundry verses of it, "I am God, and there is none else; and the Saviour, and there is none beside me:" most pleasantly conjoining the notion of God and Saviour together, over and over, that when we know this one God, we may know him too under the pleasant notion of a Saviour. No discovery of him could be more suitable, or more grateful to poor creatures sunk and lost in misery as we are. And so you know, the apostle puts both these together, the "One God and one Mediator," revealing to us this truth—the unity of the Godhead in conjunction with what is most apposite and suitable with the state of our case in that 1 Cor. 8. 6. "To us there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ. And 1 Tim. 2. 5. "There is one God

and one mediator, the man Christ Jesus." And that place is famous, 1 John 5. 7. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." That oneness can mean nothing there, but in the Deity, in the Godhead.

2. But this matter is very capable of very clear rational evidence too; which because it is not obvious to every one at first sight, I would only help you herein a little, not doubting but you will apprehend things to be very plain to you, when you hear them, which might have been out of your thoughts or sight before: both what hath been already proved, and what is otherwise evident concerning God, will prove to us the unity of the Godhead, and also what is obvious to our common notice concerning the state of the creation. It is by the creation we come to have the first notices of the Creator, as you have heard. That is, of the invisible power and Godhead by the things that are made. Now whether you look to the Maker, the Creator of all made things; or whether you look to the state of those things themselves, you will find clear rational evidence that the Godhead is but *one*, or that God can be but *one*.

(1.) Consider what hath been made plain, or is otherwise evident, concerning God himself, the very notion of God: thence it will appear, that the Deity admits not of multiplication, or that there can be more Gods than one. As,

[1.] It hath been proved, and is in itself evident, that God is a self-original, a self-existing Being. He is such a Being as that he doth not owe it to another, that he is, but only to himself. He only is in being, because such is the peculiar excellency of his being, as to which, it is altogether repugnant and impossible ever not to be. He exists, necessarily of and from himself only. Now necessary self-existing, un-caused being can be but one, for whatsoever is un-caused is unlimited, all limitation proceeding from a cause; and of unlimited being there can be no more than one, for if there were two, one must limit the other: and so neither would be unlimited. And,

[2.] It belongs to the notion of God, considered in reference to other things, to be the very first in himself. He is uncaused towards the creature: he is the first Cause. Now nothing is plainer than that there can be but one first.

[3.] To whom it belongs to be the first of all things, to him it belongs also to be the last, and it is as evident there can be but one last: and as to these things that are so plain, I do not need to insist, but just lay them before you. Therefore,

[4.] It belongs to the notion of God, as he is God, to be the best of all beings, But there can be but one best good, in the

eminent and transcendent sense ; and so there can be but one God, as the matter is in itself obvious, and is taken up by our Saviour, in that 18 Luke 19. "None is good but one, that is God," or saving God. Again,

[5.] It belongs to the very being of God to be omnipotent, almighty, and it is most evident, that there can be but one omnipotent ; for supposing another omnipotent, that could do all things, then he could cause that other not to be able to do any thing, otherwise he were not omnipotent. And if he could do that, then the former were not omnipotent, but plainly impotent, absolutely impotent ; that is, not able to do any thing.

[6.] And lastly, that which sums up all ; it belongs to the notion of God to be the absolutely universal, perfect Being ; to comprehend in himself all perfection : that is, either formally, that which is his own, or appropriate to his own being ; or eminently, that which is to be found any where throughout the creation. Now universal perfection, or all perfection can have but one seat. For there can be but one all ; there cannot be more than all ; and all perfection is comprised in the divine Being. The very notion of God, imports all perfection, signifies him to be the Fountain of whatsoever can come under the notion of perfection ; and which is perpetually springing from himself, and (when it is his pleasure to communicate) communicating from himself thereof to his creatures. And,

(2.) If you look upon the state of things in the creation, you will find that most plainly to signify to us the unity of the Godhead. As,

[1.] In the natural world ; the order that is every where to be observed and seen ; that speaks the unity, oneness, and one-ness of the Agent, that had the forming and continual management of the affairs of all this creation. It was impossible there could be that order which is every where to be observed in the natural world, the heaven and earth, sun, moon and stars, with the constant succession of day and night, summer and winter ; and that variety of creatures, with the due order still preserved in that great variety even here upon earth. I say it is impossible this could be, if that mighty Agent that made, and that over-rules all, were not one, and *only* one : as the Psalmist takes notice, psal. 119. 94. Having spoken of heaven and earth before, he saith "They continue to this day according to thy ordinance, for all are thy servants." "They are all in a stated subserviency to thee, as the only one that dost moderate, and dispose, and order all things, according to thine

own pleasure ; and so they remain stedfast and settled for ever." And,

[2.] Even in the intellectual world, the intelligent world : consider the state of things there. Indeed there, there might be an objection, or from thence ; which objection will be easily improved into an argument to the purpose I am speaking to : that is, that in the intellectual world, there is so great disorder, as we see, such confusions among men, and proceeding from that which we find to have been in a higher order of intelligent creatures, the angels that fell. But this, I say, is improvable into an argument, in that they fell, and are in a fallen state, those angels, and the generality of men, it shews, that all this disorder and confusion, hath come from their receding from the *one God*. They therefore came into that disorder and confusion, (which is the sad object of our daily contemplation, whenever we use our thoughts about such a thing,) having broken off themselves from the one God : from thence doth this disorder proceed ; and, considering these two sorts of intelligent creatures, that lie under our notice, (to confine our eyes to the children of men,) they are either such as are in a state of apostasy still ; or they are such as are in their return, and upon recovery, coming back to God in Christ. For those that are in a state of apostasy still, as they remain apostate and off from God, they make this world that they inhabit, a hell of confusion to themselves, which shews, that the disorder is by their breaking themselves from the one God, the centre of all virtue, and of all order thereupon. But for those, that are returning, that are coming back to God, under the conduct of Christ, that are in the exercise of repentance towards God, according as their minds are changed, according as that great work of renovation obtains, and takes place in them, so it becomes more and more their habitual sense, to own, even from their very hearts and souls, the *ONE GOD*. Then this is their sense, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord." To dwell with God as my only one, (as in that, 27 psalm 4. And as in the 73 psalm 25.) "Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and whom on earth do I desire besides thee ?" It is very true indeed, that in the apostate part of the world, very great multitudes are quite wrong in their notions about this thing, as the polytheism of the pagan world, (of the most ignorant and sottish part of it, though the wiser part, even of that too, have always acknowledged one supreme God, looking upon the rest as so many ministering gods, meaning, no doubt, the same thing that we do by angels,) doth shew. But where

once the light and grace of the gospel do obtain, in conjunction, there is not only a rectitude of motion about this matter, but there is a correspondent sense of heart. "One thing have I desired, I can dwell no where, but with God, with any content: and whom have I in heaven, but thee?" All renewed senses, do presently return to this one, all are gathered back to one centre in one, in this one they all meet; they no sooner begin to live, but all their desires, and all their aims, and all their tendencies are directed the same way, to this one centre. And therefore now to make some *Use* of this.

1. We learn from it, the insupportable misery of those that have no relation to, nor interest in, this one God. God is but one. "Oh! then," may every such wretched soul say, "what shall become of me, who have no part in him, no portion in him?" There is but one God to save thee, and thou hast nothing to do with him: but one God to satisfy thee, and thou hast nothing to do with him: but one to save thee, and if he will destroy thee, who will save thee? If there be but one, and he be set against thee, if he be thine enemy; if this be the state of thy case, that thou liest open to the destructive wrath of this one God, who shall save thee? There is but one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; (as it comes in after, James 4. 12.) and there is but one to satisfy thee: thou was lost for want of being satisfied, by a suitable good: if thou wert never so safe from any external, any vindictive evil. There is but one good, that is God; no proportionable good, nor adequate good besides, no good that can fill up the capacity of the soul. How may such a creature go, bemoaning itself in so sad a state of its case! "There is but one good, throughout the whole universe of being, and I have nothing to do with that one; I have no part there."

2. As the misery of such, is insupportable, so truly, their sin is as inexcusable: for there is but one God that claims obedience and duty from thee. The case is in this easy way to be understood. Let it be considered, you have not one to command, and another to countermand; one to bid, and another to forbid. There is one God: you know there is but one: you believe there is but one. No man (it is true) can serve two masters, who should both lay claim to supreme power over him. No one can serve two, but sure one may serve one, when there is but one, and his mind is express and plain; therefore the sin of such is altogether inexcusable. Thou hast but one God to worship; and what! not worship him. But one God to love, but one to fear, but one to trust: but one object for thy adoration, one object for thy expectation: and thou art to do him

hömage every day, in both together ; both in adoring him and expecting from him. And what ! to rob this one God of the glory, the service which he claims, and which thou mightest pay, and render to him ! There is no exception against it, no counter claim, against this claim of his.

3. We further learn hence, how high and great is the privilege of those, that do belong to God, in that he is but one : they do not need to be divided among many, and to have their hearts distracted within them, "Whither shall I go ? to whom shall I betake myself ?" Their privilege is great, upon this account, with respect both to their knowledge of this one God, and their application to him, the former whereof, leads to the latter.

(1.) In respect to their knowledge of him ; it is a very great privilege, that the eye of their mind and soul is called to one, directed to one : here is eternal life summed up (as it were) in one glance. "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent ;" to know him as he is revealed, and as he is to be conversed with, through his Son : and in what a transport, do we find the disciples, upon this account, it being the great business and design of our blessed Lord to reveal the Father to poor souls. "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth," say they. Saith he, "You do know the Father, in that you have known me," in that 14 John. Then saith one of them, Judas, not Iscariot, (no not he, I warrant you, he had not a heart to savour any such thing,) "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world ?" Oh ! how lamentable is it to think (as if they had said) of the sad state of the blinded world, how little they know, how obscure and dark their notices are and how corrupted and depraved about the one Godhead. But Christ tells them, that in manifesting himself he manifested the Father too. And "Oh ! (say they) whence is this to us, that we should have this manifestation when it is not afforded to the world, is not made common to the universality of men ? And,

(2.) In respect of application to him ; Oh, how great is the privilege not to be put to worship stocks and stones for deities and to pray to a god that cannot save. When we think of the inanimate, senseless gods which the blind nations do trust in and worship, we have then just cause to think with ourselves, "Oh, how unlike to them is the portion of Jacob ! He is the Former of all things. Our God hath made the heavens, and doth whatsoever he will, there above and here below."

4. We hence see what obligation is upon us to singleness

of heart. The Deity wherewith we have most of all to do, finally, terminatively to do, is single, is but one. How to be abhorred a thing, hereupon, must a double heart be, a heart—and a heart! For a single God, how suitable is a single heart! There is not for us a God—and a God. And what should we do then for a heart—and a heart? The whole must go to the whole, one to one. When our Saviour had been telling us, (Matt. 6. 24.) “No man can serve two masters,” he points us back to what we find there in the same context: that if the eye be single, the whole body will be full of light. But if the eye be evil, (which implies that a double heart is an evil heart,) then all is in darkness. And saith he, “If the very light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?” When our eye looks with one direct and undivided view towards the one God, here the soul is all replenished with light, clear, and vital light, that is transfused through it. But multiplicity and darkness come all to one. If we do not look with a single eye to that one single Being, where all glory and all blessedness for poor souls reside; but are looking to other things, and departing from this one, we are presently lost in multiplicity, and see many things under that notion, as if our good lay here, or as if the prime duty lay here, it is all one as seeing nothing, as good to know nothing of any God at all, as to know many gods, or to consider many under that notion. And again,

5. We see hereupon how possible the most entire and intimate union with God is with sincere souls. To those that are sincere, if he be but one, how entire and intimate may the union be between one and one? When we bring to him a single soul, a soul full of simplicity, uprightness and sincerity, which points only at him as the one God, he being but one, and we but one in the intention and aim of our souls, how entire and intimate may this union be! That which some pagans have expressed by that nearest and closest and most intimate touch of the centre; centre to centre, so (have some of them said) are souls to apply themselves inwardly to God; the one God joining centre with them. And it is a mighty solace to think of it: that whereas the felicity of a soul doth so absolutely depend upon the most near and intimate union with God, that which is so necessary is so possible. It is necessary to me, in order to my happiness and well being, that I be most intimately and entirely united with God; and since he is but one, if I be one in the intent and bent of my soul towards him, it is not more necessary than possible. For observe how the scribe, that puts that question to our Lord in that forementioned Mark 12. understands this conjunction, when our Lord

answered him, what was the first and great commandment ; namely, " the first and great commandment is, that God is but one, and that there is no other God but he, and that therefore we should love him, with all the heart," he replies, " Master thou hast said well, for there is but one God : " and our Lord, it is said, observed, that he answered like a man of sense, like a man of understanding, like an intelligent man. There lies the connexion, " therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, because the Lord our God, is one God, and there is none other but he." And,

6. We may hence collect the mighty obligation there is upon christians, to unity with one another ; to be united one with another. Those several unities you read of, Ephes. 4. are all directed to this one purpose, and this is the prime and most fundamental of all the rest, " There is but one God ; " and therefore are all those related to him, and that bear his name, to be but one. It cannot be said, one christian hath one God, and another hath another God : but all have but one God ; so that it is impossible there can be any so great reasons for disunion among christians, those that are sincere, that have vital union with God in Christ, as there are for their union. Whatsoever pretence there can be for disunion, or for distinct communion, the reason is unspeakably greater for union. By how much doth God outweigh all things else, infinite reason is there for oneness in communion throughout, as he, with whom they have all a common union is infinite. But the things, wherein they differ from one another, are most minutely finite, and even as nothing, in comparison of this one thing, wherein they must all (whether they will or not) agree. And thereupon indeed, there cannot be a greater iniquity in the Christian church (which is the community of living christians) than when they do usually make distinct communions. This I must tell you, is the very heart and centre of all anti-christianism, the first remarkable thing in the apostasy of the Christian church, when it began to degenerate, that is, the making of distinct communions, or making of other terms of communion, than Christ had made by the evangelical law. This was the very heart of all anti-christianity, when men would take upon them to make distinct boundaries and terms of communion, which should be larger than Christ would have made, or narrower than Christ had made : to admit men upon such terms as his rules would admit none ; and exclude men on such terms as his rules would exclude none ; this is the first thing, the summary and most comprehensive thing, in all anti-christianity. Then the Christian church, first began to be anti-christian, when it came to this, to make other terms of

communion, than Christ had made, by his own law. And indeed, the iniquity of it, is intolerable, if it be considered: for under what notion, are any to be received into the community of christians, but under the notion of persons visibly united to God in Christ, and so instated into the blessings of the gospel, and so entitled to everlasting blessedness in God, procured for them by the general Redeemer? Whereupon, to make new terms of communion, larger or narrower than Christ made, is to make a new covenant, to make a new gospel: it is to make new terms of everlasting life and death; and so to overturn and overthrow all things, that are most essential to a Christian church, or to the Christian religion, or any thing of religion in the world. It would strike at all, if men may shape their communion, according to their own fancy, when they are to shape it according to the evangelical law. Those that we believe to have vital union with God in Christ, or whom we ought to believe have so; we that with a sincere mind, look upon persons by gospel measures, and consider them as those who have visible characters of true vivid Christianity upon them ought to run into communion with them as such, and only such. This is Christ's measure, and Christ's rule, and so communion can be but one, and to offer to make it diverse and distinct, is to make a new gospel, and a new Christ, and a new religion throughout. Indeed it is a bold thing; for it is to make new terms of life and death. It is presumptuous enough to put the divine stamp upon this or that truth of ours, or this or that duty (as we count it) of our own; it is a great presumption: but unspeakably greater, to make new terms of life and death: for every truth, or every duty, are not parts of the terms of life and death. There is many a truth that is not necessary for a man to believe, under pain of damnation; and many a duty a man may be ignorant of, and so not bound to do, upon pain of damnation. But the terms upon which christians are to hold communion one with another, are such, to which we are bound under that penalty, or which are to be looked upon, as entitling them to be interested in salvation, or exempted from damnation: and so to make new terms of communion, is to make new terms of life and death. But blessed be God, though this hath been too little considered for above forty years past, God is awakening his people, to consider it now. And I look upon that to be the first step towards the restitution of the Christian church, and the recovering of it, out of the terrible apostasy in which it hath lain for a thousand years, and upwards. This, I say, is the first step towards it, to make those the terms of union, and communion in the Chris-

tian church, which God in Christ hath made. And when that once comes to obtain generally, then we shall find the spirit of the body, (for there is but one body and one spirit) diffusing and influencing itself through the body, and making it lively, a kind of resurrection from the dead. It may further,

7. Be collected, that our encouragement is great, as to what expectation we may have, concerning the issue of things, since God is but one. That is, concerning the issue which things shall drive to here in this world, and concerning their ultimate and final issue in the other world, it cannot but be good and happy; for God is but one, who in his Christ is the universal and only Ruler of all this world. If the kingdom of God in Christ were divided, it would come to nothing; but it is not divided, it is all in one hand, who hath the ordering and disposing of the times and seasons, as seems good to him, and he doth every thing with that profound wisdom that cannot err, and that mighty power, that cannot be withstood. And since the most perfect wisdom, and most absolute power, do belong to that one; and all affairs do lie in one hand, the issue will certainly be good. I cannot say it will be good to us, according to our fancy and our sense of things, but it must be, in itself, good. The kingdom is not divided, there is but one God, and one Christ, who governs this apostate world, by his own right, as God, and by a right, that he hath devolved upon him, as the Mediator. And therefore, never doubt concerning the issue of things, let them look never so horribly, and with never so confused an aspect; all will do well, for all is in the hand of one God.

And then, as to the final state, what transports should we be in, to think, when all that belongs to this one God, shall meet in this one God, the many sons brought to glory together, when God shall be all in all, one in all, one diffusing a vital, satisfying, beatifying influence through all, through the whole community, that relates to him, and is united to him, all (as it were) losing themselves in the one God, not in the natural sense, but in the moral; as morality comprehends duty and felicity both together, and the very Scripture expressions that speak of God's being all in all, doth imply this distinction, for otherwise he could not be all in all, if there were not a created all which he replenisheth, with his own fulness. "All in all," is not as if all being were to be reserved and swallowed up again into the fountain Being, and that the blessed should lose their individuality; no, no such thing, the very words and the nature of the thing, are repugnant to that, but when that all of holy ones shall be gathered about the central good, and be replenished continually, perpetually, fully and everlastingly

from thence, Oh ! how satisfyingly then shall we experience the truth and sweetness of this thing,—that the Godhead is but *one*.

And this is enough as to the first thing which we have to consider in the text, “thou believest there is one God, thou doest well.” The belief of this is approved and justified.

## LEC. XII.\*

II. But then the ineffectual believing of it is reproved and condemned ; to believe it with such a kind of notional faith as the devils believe it with. The former was the main thing for which I pitched upon this scripture, but this latter I shall not overlook ; it having so great an aptitude with it to help and enforce the right improvement of the former. That is,—the *ineffectual* belief of the Unity of the Godhead, which the apostle doth, in this expression, designedly animadvert upon, may be easily collected from this present scope, which is to shew what kind of faith that is which must justify us ; not a notional dead faith, such as lets the soul wherein it is, remain unchanged, such as works not within, such as leaves the soul just as it was. You may see his scope fully represented to this purpose in the 14th verse, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works ? can faith save him ?” can that idle faith, that unworking faith that effects nothing, can that save him ? “I appeal to you, (as if he had said) whether it can.” He doth not say it cannot, but he doth appeal to them whether it can or no : and it is true, that manner of interrogation doth deny that it can, more pungently : that is always the intent of questions or interrogatories, put in the room of affirmations or negations, to deny or affirm more smartly or with more pungency than a bare affirmation or negation would have done. It is an appeal to the common light and conscience of the person spoken to. Can such a faith save ? And then he comes at length, in prosecution of this scope, to this particular truth. I may not now run over with you the whole thread of this discourse ; but immediately before the words of the text, he urgeth this, “A man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works : shew me thy faith without thy works ;” that is, if thou canst shew me any thing that is worth that name. But I for my part “will shew thee my faith by my works,” as knowing it can never significantly or to purpose be shewn otherwise. And then he comes to this particular case, “Thou believest there is one God, thou doest well ; the devils also believe and tremble.” If thou

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hast no other faith, in this point of the one God's existence, but the devils' faith; nay if thine fall short of such a faith; dost thou think it will save thee? This is the meaning pursuantly to the present scope. His great question is, what faith will finally save, and for resolving of it, his great business is to evince and make out, that there must be some intervening effects in order to that final salvation for which the faith that will save must have a proportionable efficacy. If it did not work those intervening intermediate effects, it would not bring about the end, salvation. And so the truth that now remains, to be spoken to from this latter part of the verse, you have it plainly in view thus—That the ineffectual belief of the one God's existence, or such a belief of it as doth not beget in the soul proportionable dispositions towards God, will no more save a stupid man than a trembling devil—And to speak briefly and usefully (as much as is possible) to this, it will be requisite to shew—what effects or dispositions our faith of the one God's existence, should work in men—to open to you what it doth work in the devils, and—to shew, that if it do not its proper work upon men, it will no more save men, than devils.

1. What it ought to work, what impressions the faith of the one God's existence, should make upon men. The impressions it ought to make upon men, must be measured and judged of, by the state of their case, wherein it is different, and represented to them as different from that of the devils. That is, that though they have been in an apostasy from God, their sovereign and rightful Lord, as the devils have been, yet he is reconcileable to men, when he is not to the devils: and where the gospel comes, it shews distinctly how, and in what way, and upon what terms he is reconcileable. The belief then of the one God's existence, you may easily apprehend what it effects upon this supposal of the case. There is but one to whom I owe obedience as my Sovereign, to him I must subject myself. There is but one, from whom I can expect blessedness: a portion and interest in him, I must seek. I have hitherto been in an apostasy from him, I have hereby violated the bounds of my duty to him, and forfeited all interest in him: but I find there is a remedy to be given to this case, and through the Redeemer, God is reconcileable: he recalls me to my duty, he offers to restore me to my interest. It is plain then, what impressions should be made, to wit, of "repentance towards God and (upon discovery made of him) faith in our Lord Jesus Christ:" a disposition to come back to God, through Christ, with a heart full of wonder, full of gratitude, full of love, ready to be devoted, and subject again: and so to do all, that can

be done on our part, or to comply, with all that is required from us, in order to the reinstating of things; between God and us, and setting all right again. But,

2. What impression is there made on devils, by the belief of the one God's existence? That one word "tremble" tells us most significantly. They "believe and tremble." Their belief strikes them so, that they are shaken by it: just as the sea with a violent wind, that tosses the waves this way and that. The *fremitus maris* is that which this word doth express, the tumultuation of the sea, as tossed by violent winds. Such an impression doth the belief of the one God's existence, make and leave upon devils: that is, it stirs those violent passions in them, which we must suppose the view of the one God, in his terrible majesty and glory, is apt to raise in his creatures, in their state who are apostatized, and revolted from him, and know there is no redeemer for them, that God will not be reconciled to them, and they themselves have no disposition to seek reconciliation with him; that is, such passions as these; the passion of hatred: every view they have of the one God in his majesty and glory, stirs up their enmity, and the oftener they view it, the more they hate it, and especially considered under the notion of just and holy. It cannot but stir the passion of envy, looking on him under the notion of happy: it cannot but move their dread and horror concerning him, under the notion of almighty, not to be resisted, not to be withstood. And then it stirs up the passion of despair too, considering themselves as none of his match, and that they are never to expect that he will yield to them as they know they can never conquer him. But,

3. Why is a stupid man no more to expect salvation from the ineffectual faith of the one God's existence, than a forlorn trembling devil? That men have been in an apostasy from God, as well as devils, is plain to us all. That death, that is, eternal death is the proper wages of that sin by which they have apostatized, that is plain to us all too: why should not an apostate man therefore, lie under the just wrath of God, as well as an apostate devil? All that can be said in the case is, that Christ hath died for men and not for devils: here is all that can be alleged. And so we need do no more for the clearing of this matter further, than only to consider what alteration this makes in the case, and in order thereto, I will lay down sundry things that I reckon very plain, and such as do carry their own evidence with them.

(1.) As, that there is no natural connexion between the death of Christ and the salvation of a sinner. These two things

are not naturally connected, the death of Christ and the salvation of a sinful man. It is plain and obvious in itself, that there is no natural connexion; these things do not naturally touch one another.

(2.) Therefore there can be no connexion at all, between them but such as shall be ordinate or made, there cannot be any connexion, without its being made, between the death of Christ and the salvation of any man.

(3.) There can be no pretence of any such made connexion, but such as the gospel constitution makes, that is, made between the death of Christ and the salvation of any man, but what the gospel hath made by its constitution.

(4.) The gospel doth make no connexion between the death of Christ and the salvation of any sinner, without intervening faith. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." The gospel makes no other connexion between that death to which he gave up his own Son, and our having, any of us, everlasting life, but upon the supposal of an intervening faith.

(5.) That faith which the gospel requires for this purpose, it describes and tells us what it is, it describes it by distinguishing characters; it tells us, it is such a faith as overcomes the world. 1 John 5. 4. It tells us it is such a faith as by which the hearts of men are turned to the Lord; "many believed and turned to the Lord." Acts 11. 21. It tells us, it is such a faith, as "is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;" (Heb. 11. 1.) that faith that conquers one world, and reveals another. That faith (I say) which the gospel requires for this purpose, to wit, of the salvation of sinners, by the Redeemer, it doth also describe, and tells us what it is. Whereupon,

(6.) Not to have that faith which the gospel doth so describe is, in the gospel estimate, to have no faith. He that hath not this faith is an unbeliever, still an unbeliever. As when we speak of having any thing (whatsoever it be) that is necessary for this or that end or purpose, it is not the name of that thing, the misapplied name of that thing, that will serve the end or purpose, but it is plain, only the thing itself will do it. It is true, you may call painted bread by the name of bread; you may call the picture of a loaf, a loaf, but it is not painted bread that will nourish you, nor is it the notion of gospel faith, or the name of that faith misapplied that will save you. They who have not the faith which the gospel requires, have no faith *quoad hoc*, that will serve *this* purpose, because that faith

which is so and so described, it requires as necessary for this purpose of saving. And therefore,

(7.) Lastly; They which have not this faith, being thereupon still unbelievers, that is, they are unbelievers in reference to this faith; they have none of that faith that the gospel requires in order to salvation, they must accordingly have the unbeliever's portion, and the portion of unbelievers and devils is all one. Compare Luke 12. 46. with Matt. 25. 41. In the first it is, "Let such a one have his portion with unbelievers:" and then consider that they who fall under such a doom and condemnation at last, are condemned to that "fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels," as it is in the latter place. So that let a man believe never so much this one thing, (which among the rest it is needful he should believe in order to salvation,) to wit, the one God's existence; but it doth not work upon his soul, impresseth him not; altereth him not, it can no more save him than it will save the devil.

Yea, and it might be added, that the gospel constitution, in this case, making such a faith necessary, doth not only speak the pleasure of the Legislator, but it speaks most consentaneously to the reason of the thing and with the greatest advantage. Here is reconciliation offered to sinful men; but there is none offered to the devil: in this respect then (though I do not say absolutely in all respects) their guilt is greatest. That one who is no way suitably affected with that discovery which is made to him of God, considered with reference to the state of his case, and the gospel dispensation under which he is, such a one as doth in this respect remain unchanged, his heart unaltered, not won, not turned to God; lies under greater guilt than the devils themselves do lie.

Therefore now to make some brief *Use* of this. Hence,

1. We learn, that it is a supposable thing, that persons living under the gospel, professed christians, (for the apostle speaks to such here,) may be no more duly and suitably affected with the discovery that is made to them of the one God, than the very devils. This is not an unsupposable thing, that man may have the representation of God which the gospel affords, super-added to all that is natural, and be no more suitably affected therewith than a mere devil, this is a truly supposable case. And that it is a case to be supposed, a thing that may be, should strike all our hearts with just solicitude hereupon. May it be? And what! Is it not so with me? Have I not lived all this while amidst that light that reveals the one God, unaltered, unchanged, unimpressed, just as I should have been, if there had been no such light, no such discovery? And again,

2. We may infer, that persons may be in a very great measure like the devil that do very seldom think of him: nay (it may be) do think there is no such creature. It is very likely that this sort of persons whom the apostle here speaks to, with such smartness and acrimony, might very little think of the devil till they met with this epistle, till they were so put in mind. This may very well be. Persons may be very much akin to the devil in the temper and complexion of their minds, when they very little think of him, or of any such matter. And they are most of all like him that are most positive in their disbelief of any such sort of creatures as devils are. That piece of revived modern sabbuceisin goes now, with many, for a great piece of wit and learning. And a very strange thing it is, that we should have had among us a clearer light than the greatest part of the world have had, to make us more ignorant and unapprehensive of things that are of very great concern to us; clearer than the pagan world have had, and yet how many things do we find discoursed concerning the devil, among their poets and philosophers, that there are such a sort of middle creatures between the gods (the supreme God at least) and men: and that these are distinguished into two orders of good and bad. Nothing more frequent in the writings of pagans than that there are the good *genii* and *cacodæmones*: some of them seem not to have been ignorant, however they came by the knowledge, of the apostasy of the devils; and of their being thrown down from their happy state above, into very great darkness and misery. But it seems, our having of clearer light, and more express discoveries of things relating to an invisible world, than pagans had, hath served only to make a great many of us a great deal more ignorant, and less apprehensive of these things and more insolent in the belief of them than they. But it is strange that they who are so very like the devil, should be of all others most unapt to own or apprehend that there are any such creatures, or any such sort of creatures. But,

3. We may infer, that it is not strange, when the cause is so very like between men and devils, that their doom should be so like also: that we cannot think it strange, that we should remain and be left under that doom and condemnation which sin did in itself subject them to: who when God hath made overtures to them, to distinguish them from these evil spirits, will not be distinguished, but rather choose to sort themselves with devils than with returning souls, souls that are willing to return to God through Christ.

We see the terrible estate of devils, that they cannot own the one God's existence without trembling. A frightful thought

it is to them, to have the eternal Being always in view, that is, what he is necessarily, without variableness or shadow of turning: they cannot nullify his being, they cannot shake his throne, they cannot alter his nature: the glorious, bright, majestic Object is always in view, and they can never look towards it without dread and astonishment. Whatsoever little respite they may have, which those words imply, "Art thou come to torment us before our time?" it doth yet signify, that any thought of God was dreadful to them, as importing that state of torment that was approaching, was drawing on, wherein it will be let forth on them, wherein wrath will come upon them (as it must upon unreconciled men) to the uttermost. But,

5. How wonderful is the grace of God towards poor sinful men, that their case doth admit, and may admit of their owning and believing the one God's existence, with another sort of impression than the case of the devils doth admit of. For that is plainly implied here, and therefore I make this inference and collection,—that it is expected that men should be otherwise impressed by this belief of the one God's existence than the devils may or can. It is expected the faith of this should make other kind of work in the heart of a man that entertains this belief; than it can do in the heart of a devil. And that very intimation signifies peculiar favour and special good-will, special, if compared with them, though it be yet more special, if you compare men with one another. Such good-will is the import of those words, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men." "He took not on him the nature of angels," or (as those words may admit to be read) "he took not hold of angels to save them; but took on him the seed of Abraham." His design herein spoke itself, (as in that 2 Heb. 14.) "Inasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he himself did partake of the same." Saith he, "Those that I came to save, are such as have flesh and blood in them, not devils." And because they had flesh and blood in them, he likewise took flesh and blood that he might save such; that is, that he might die, that he might have somewhat mortal about him, somewhat that could die, that was capable of dying, and that dying he might overcome "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

6. We may learn hence, that there is not too great a stress to be laid upon the mere business of orthodoxy, or a rectitude of notions and sentiments, though about the greatest and most important things, things never so great: and you may suppose none greater than this, the existence of the one God, the cer-

tain existence of the unity of the Godhead. But yet, I say, a rectitude of notions or sentiments, even about so great things, or that which we generally call orthodoxy, ought not to have too great a stress laid upon them. I doubt not but that there is entire orthodoxy in hell, there is very little error in hell, very little of untrue notions, the truth of things is very clearly apprehended there, even the most terrible things; false doctrine doth not obtain there about such matters as this, to be sure: and therefore, let no man value himself too much upon this, that he understands aright, that he thinks right thoughts, doth believe that there is one God, one, and but one. He may do no more in this, than the devils do, they may be as orthodox as he; and he may therein know no more truth than they know. But we may yet further infer,

7. That it is a very dismal thing, and ought accordingly to be deplored much, that such things as we have revealed to us, concerning God, should be from time to time propounded and explained, and inculcated, and yet have no more effect upon us, than upon devils. How many a man is there, that lives under the gospel of Christ, unreconciled to God all his days? Oh, if there be any such a one in this assembly, How often hast thou been striven with to turn and live? how often invited back to God in Christ? But it hath signified as little to preach to thee all this while, as if one had preached to a devil. Oh, wretched creature, that thou wilt make thyself a devil, when God doth not make thee such! that thou wilt sort with the devils, when God would deal with thee, on very distinct terms from them! He would have thee come to him: he doth not invite devils back; he saith to thee, "Return, return:" he saith not so to them. Here is the blood of a Redeemer spilt for thee, it was not for them. And if we consider this matter generally; Oh, how dismal it is to think, that the revelation of the doctrine of the very one God's existence, should have made no more impression than it hath, to advantage the world of mankind; that the state of things should be so very much upon earth, as it is in hell! as if there were no difference in the cases of men and devils; that there should be such enmity against God, amongst men upon earth, such rage, such contempt, such blasphemy against this one existing Deity. And indeed, in this, men are worse than the devils, for the devils do hate God, but they do not despise him: here on earth he is hated and despised too: the devils hate him, but they cannot contemn him: men hate and contemn him both together. "Wherefore do the wicked contemn God?" Psal. 10. 13. But lastly,

8. We further learn hence, what this doctrine is likely to ef-

fect, if ever it come generally and to purpose, to be believed in the world, even this faith of the one God's existence. What a blessed change will that infer and make generally among men; when the one God shall be represented and understood and known with effect generally! if ever there shall be such a time. That is, there shall be a world of reasonable creatures, all centering in this one, all conspiring in the adoration and love of this one God; all bowing to him and kneeling before him: and no contention amongst men but who shall express most of love and duty to their universal, sovereign Maker and Lord. And therefore, men are only miserable in the meantime by not having real truth impressed and inwrought into the temper of their spirits, they are only by this miserable, that they are fallen from the one God, and apprehend him not, apprehend not the unity of the Godhead in whom they all are to unite. If men were all united in God, in the fear of him, in the love of him, in subjectedness and devotedness to him, this could not but infer universal order, peace and felicity, all the world over. Men are only miserable, only unhappy, by holding the truth in unrighteousness, and such truth; for the apostle speaks of such. This is the true ground, on which "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them." Rom. 1. 17. 18. But I shall not insist further upon this.

The next thing that comes in course, to be handled, will be the doctrine of the Trinity. Having opened the Unity of the Godhead, a Trinity therein also, will next come under our consideration.

END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.

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*Mason, Printer, Chichester.*