

**A DISCUSSION, AMONG UPWARDS OF
250 THEOLOGICAL INQUIRERS,
CLERGYMEN, DISSENTING MINISTERS,
AND LAYMEN; ON THE UNITY, DUALITY,
AND TRINITY, OF THE GODHEAD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649663255

A Discussion, Among Upwards of 250 Theological Inquirers, Clergymen, Dissenting Ministers, and Laymen; On the Unity, Duality, and Trinity, of the Godhead by B. S. Nayler

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

B. S. NAYLER

**A DISCUSSION, AMONG UPWARDS OF
250 THEOLOGICAL INQUIRERS,
CLERGYMEN, DISSENTING MINISTERS,
AND LAYMEN; ON THE UNITY, DUALITY,
AND TRINITY, OF THE GODHEAD**

ON THE
UNITY, DUALITY, AND TRINITY,
OF THE
GODHEAD.

A

DISCUSSION

AMONG UPWARDS OF 250 THEOLOGICAL INQUIRERS,

Clergymen, Dissenting Ministers, and Laymen ;

ON THE

UNITY, DUALITY, AND TRINITY,

OF THE

G O D H E A D :

WITH DIGRESSIONS ON THE



CREATION, FALL, INCARNATION, ATONEMENT, RESURRECTION,
INFALLIBILITY OF THE SCRIPTURES,
INSPIRATION, MIRACLES, FUTURE PUNISHMENTS,
REVISION OF THE BIBLE, ETC.

The Press corrected by RANLEY, the Reporter of the Discussion.

Time erases the Fictions of unfounded Opinions; but, confirms the Judgements which are in accordance with Truth. CICERO.

Time is the nurse and breeder of all Good. SHAKESPEARE.

Let Truth and Falschood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter? MILTON.

Differences of Opinion, when accompanied with mutual charity, which Christianity forbids to violate, are, for the most part, innocent, and for some purposes useful—they promote inquiry, discussion, and knowledge. Archdeacon PALEY.

Whoever is afraid of submitting any question, civil or religious, to the test of free Discussion, seems to me to be more in love with his own Opinions than with Truth. WATSON, Bishop of Llandaff.

He who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth, will proceed by loving his own Sect or Church better than Christianity, and end in loving Himself better than all. COLERIDGE.

LONDON :

TRÜBNER AND CO. 60, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1864.

100. w. 70.
141. l. 207.

[Chairman speaking when Reporter entered]

and, as I intimated to your Committee of Management, by letter, I now tell you personally, that much as I disapprove of so-called *Religious Discussions* in general,* I have been induced to take the Chair on this occasion, from a persuasion—or rather, *in the hope*, that the Opponents meet each other to elicit Truth, *not* to obtain Victory; [Hear, hear!] and as You yourselves have arranged preliminaries, my duties of Office are very simple: I have not anything further to do with the “Regulations” you have mutually agreed upon, and which I have just read over in your hearing, than to observe them myself, and to guard you against departing from them; and should the Discussion in anywise tend to settle the minds of any individuals composing this goodly assemblage, on the long-vexed question, I shall not regret the inconvenience I have experienced in being present at this Meeting. [Cheers.]

You, on my right hand, consider yourselves warranted, by Scripture, in maintaining the doctrine of the TRINITY—that “the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet, they are not *three* Gods, but *one* God—the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity”; while You, on my left, maintain, by Scripture, the UNITY OF THE GODHEAD—“One God and Father of all, He that is over all, and through all, and in us all”; and that “there is none other God but *One*—the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ”.

With earnest and honest-minded men, the doctrine of the Trinity, is, after due investigation, either sedulously upheld, or, unequivocally disowned—according to men’s different views of Scripture—but, persons in general, have never given it so much as an hour’s consideration; having clothed their minds, as they clothe their bodies—after the fashion in vogue: yet, though views and opinions may vary, and even run counter to each other, still, both parties may have credit in each other’s integrity, as well as in the

* “Differences of Opinion, when accompanied with mutual charity (which Christianity forbids to violate) are, for the most part, innocent, and for some purposes useful—they promote inquiry, discussion, and knowledge. ARCHDEACON PALMY.

integrity of the Evangelists and the Apostles ; therefore, in the language of good old Herbert—

*Be calm in Arguing ; for, fierceness makes
Error a fault, and Truth discourtesy.
Why should I feel another man's mistakes
More than his sicknesses, or poverty ?
In love I should—but, anger is not love,
Nor wisdom neither—therefore, gently move”.*

Thousands, and hundreds of thousands, of professed Christians, are *what they are* from sheer accident—mere Copies of those by whom they have, accidentally, been surrounded ; and might have belonged to any other denomination, just as easily and as thoughtlessly, as the sect to which they are now allied : for, whether their parents, nurses, and associates, had happened to be Romanists or Protestants, Calvinists or Arminians, Baptists or Quakers or Israelites, they would have been *professedly* the like—mere fractions of a mass, constituting any religious body whatever, wholly irrespective of its name or tenets ; believing anything, adopting anything, subscribing anything, swearing anything—*emphatically, ANYTHINGARIANS !* for (alas) the Units on this nether world, are as rare as Comets in the heavens. [Hear, hear !] There are also *professed* Sceptics, and Infidels, and Atheists, who doubt, assert, and deny, *without investigation.** But, trust me, all such mere professional dogmatists and iconoclasts, all such believers and unbelievers, rank no higher in the estimation of thinking minds, than simple ANYTHINGARIANS ; for, they know not *what* they believe, or disbelieve ; having, at best, a zeal without knowledge. [Hear, hear !] Rely upon it,

“TRUTH, whether in or out of fashion, is *the measure* of knowledge, and the business of the understanding ! Whatsoever is besides that, [Truth] however authorized by consent, or recommended by rarity, is nothing but Ignorance, or, something worse. LOCKE.

I hope the Speakers in this Discussion, may prove themselves *men*, not mimics ; *units*, not fractions ; and that we shall be presented with a variety of arguments on both sides, as brilliant and as cutting as diamonds. [Hear, hear !]

According to Lord Kames—Differences of opinion, make the Cement of society” ; and I heartily wish, that the Disputants about to encounter, may raise themselves in the appreciation and esteem of their Opponents, by a rich display of polemical skill, courteous address, and christian charity ; and that no one may have cause to be ashamed of Himself. [Hear, hear !]

You differ in Opinion ; and you have a *right* to differ ; for, as a staunch advocate of religious freedom has observed—

Doctrinal questions seem unsusceptible of general agreement, not from the abundance, but, from the want of premises. The arguments by which different Sects defend their tenets, consist mainly of *texts of scripture*, which must be susceptible of various interpretations, since they actually receive various interpretations. The Trinitarians think, that *the eternal co-existence* of God the Father and God the Son is the scriptural doctrine. The Arians think, the Begetter must have existed *before* the Begotten. The Latin church believes, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from *the Father and the Son*. The Greek church believes, that the Holy Spirit proceeds *ONLY from the Father*. Each of these opinions has been supported by hundreds

* In the *National Reformer* of 7th June, 1862, we have Mr. Holyoake's authority for stating, that He had not met with Ten men who could give a *sensible reason* for their belief in Atheism. *Editor.*

of learned, conscientious, and diligent inquirers. Each has been adopted by millions of enthusiastic votaries; each has been propagated by violence, and resisted by endurance; each has had its doctors, its persecutors, and its martyrs. *Edinburgh Review*.

Thanks to the progress of Civilisation, no one in this assemblage runs any risk of *martyrdom* on account of his Opinions, be they what they may; and I should rejoice exceedingly, had we already so far receded from Barbarism, that I could add, with equal truth—no Englishman runs any risk of *persecution* for the promulgation of his Opinions.* [Hear, hear!] Let us, however, my friends, be thankful, that, as a people, we are in a state of social, political, scientific, moral, and religious Progress—of which this Meeting affords proof positive; for, all you quiet, orderly, respectable gentlemen on my left, would, but a couple of centuries back, have been subject to the penalty of DEATH,† had you dared to give utterance to your conscientious sentiments! Happily, in 1864, we have Platforms, as well as Pulpits, throughout the length and breadth of the land; knowledge is strenuously eradicating ignorance, public opinion is loudly denouncing persecution, while the humane and fraternizing precepts of genuine christianity, are rapidly uniting into one family the hitherto bitterly contending Sectarists, teaching all classes of men that they are *brethren*! [Cheers] The stain of legal *martyrdom* for mere difference of opinion, is for ever blotted out of our Statute-books, and the still-existing crime of *persecution* for the exercise of private judgement, is becoming every day more and more odious in the sight of Britons, who are now learning, that the real Disturbers in a free country, are those who refuse to their fellow-men, that liberty of thinking, and uttering their thoughts, which cannot any longer be repressed! [Cheers.]

I make no apology for pausing in this Opening address, to pay a public tribute of thanks to the present Bishop of London, for the fearless and cheering utterance of his enlightened sentiments, in the very first Charge to his Clergy—sentiments as spirited and liberal, as they are christian and manly! [Long-continued applause] In the presence of so many Ministers of various denominations as are here assembled, I feel myself impelled, by a sense of justice and of duty, to offer this incidental token of respect to bishop Tait, for his intrepid and conciliating expression of the following sentences—

Nothing would be so likely to *spread* scepticism and unbelief among an intelligent Laity, as any crude attempts on the part of the Clergy to treat the difficulties arising from free inquiry, *without thoroughly understanding them*. Dogmatic denunciations—sweeping accusations as to the *corrupt state of heart* from which doubt and unbelief is supposed to spring—unwise and arrogant claims to an *unquestioning* obedience and submission of the understanding, I can conceive nothing more likely to irritate intelligent men, and excite the very evils we desire to allay.

But, the apprehended *dangers of free inquiry*, are not confined to Laymen; and here, perhaps, is the most difficult and delicate part of the whole subject. There is certainly a difficulty, as to the prosecution of *any very free inquiry* by those who begin by thus professing *their belief in FIXED FORMULARIES of doctrine*, and

* "Wherever you see Persecution, there is more than a probability that Truth lies on the persecuted side. Bishop LATIMER.

† See the *Act of Death* passed by the Long Parliament, in 1649. See also Act the 8th and 9th of William III. c. 32, "for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness", wherein Unitarians "shall also suffer imprisonment, for the space of three years, without bail or mainprize", etc. *Esporteur*.

At the opening of the present century, England had about 200 different offenses entailing Capital punishment. *Editor*.

obtain the very position which gives them influence as Teachers, in virtue of this profession. Still, it would be altogether wrong, to exaggerate this difficulty. *It will never do to lay down, that a Clergyman is bound NOT TO INQUIRE.**
[Hear, hear!]

The authorities of our Church, under the leading of its best Divines, have ever deemed it wise *not* to spread the influence of unsound Teaching among a generous people, *by any the remotest semblance of Persecution*; and have rather sought ever to overcome the danger of HERESY by the manifestation of superior learning and acuteness, and a truer Christian spirit, than to prop up Truth *by the terrors of the Law.*

Even as the Declaration which the law of the land requires to be made at Ordination, I should be ready myself, *even now*, in spite of temporary alarm as to unsound Opinions, TO RELAX RATHER THAN TIGHTEN THE BOND. [Bursts of applause, especially from the Clergy of the Establishment] I hold, that in guarding the threshold of the Ministry, as elsewhere in dealing with the difficulties of an *inquisitive age*, the generous, confiding policy, is THE BEST AND MOST CHRISTIAN. We must not forget the kindly consideration with which archbishop Howley made allowance for the youthful scruples of Arnold. And certainly, most good men will allow, that the Church of England of this century would have been *maimed*, if Arnold had been scared from its ministry" † [Hear, hear!]

For these, and similar sentiments since published, I consider our worthy and courageous Bishop of London, richly entitled to our public Thanks ‡
[Hearty applause from the whole assembly.]

Agreeably with your "Regulations", I now, as Chairman, call upon the Unitarians to produce Scripture authority for their REPUTATION of the doctrine of the TRINITY.

REV. J. ADDISON. Mr. Chairman—Ladies and Gentlemen! In the New covenant, there are 17 passages wherein the Father is styled *one* or *only* God; but, not a single passage in which the Son is so styled. There are 320 passages in which the Father is absolutely, and by way of eminence, called *god*—or, more accurately, *the God* [*ὁ Θεός*—*ho Theos*—the God] but, not one passage wherein the Son is so called. There are 105 passages in which the Father is denominated *the God* with peculiarly high titles and epithets; but, the Son is not even once so denominated. There are 19 passages declaring that all *prayer* and *praise* ought to be offered to the Father, and that everything ought to be directed, ultimately, to His honor and glory; but, of the Son no such declaration is ever made. Of the 1300 passages in the New covenant wherein the term *god* occurs, there is not one which necessarily implies the existence of more than *one person* in the Godhead, or, that such *one* is any other than the Father. The passages wherein the Son is declared, either positively or by the clearest implication, to be SUBORDINATE to the Father, *deriving* his being from the Father,

* "Let not the freedom of Inquiry be shackled. If it multiplies contentions amongst the wise and virtuous, it exercises the charity of those who contend. If it shakes for a time the belief that is rooted only upon prejudice, it finally settles it on the broader and more solid basis of conviction. *WHEAT'S Hampton Lectures.*

† "I am not afraid of those tender and scrupulous consciences, who are ever cautious of professing and believing too much; if they are sincerely in the wrong, I forgive their errors, and respect their integrity. The men I am afraid of, are the men who believe everything, subscribe to everything, and vote for everything. *Bishop SHELLEY.*

‡ There is also a ring of the right metal at the close of the public letter from the Bishop of St. David's, of 18th April, 1861—

I am not aware of having refused to Others, any licence which I *ever* claimed for myself. And, if it please God, I shall *never* consent to the narrowing, *by a hair's breadth*, that latitude of Opinion which the Church has hitherto conceded to her Ministers".

Bishop Thirlwall, as well as bishop Tait, won golden opinions from the Liberal press, for the generous spirit evinced towards his brother of Natal. *Editor.*

receiving his power from the Father, acting according to the Will of the Father, exceed 300. [Hear, hear!] Now, Mr. Chairman, as these manifold passages prove, beyond rational contradiction, that—

Chairman. Order, order! Allow me, Gentlemen, to read over again, one of the "Regulations"; it is this—Mere assertions are not to be received as Proofs, on any disputable point; every argument, every assertion, must be supported, or, instantly supportable, by Scripture". Mr. Addison says, that the passages he has just enumerated, "prove, beyond rational contradiction"—if Mr. Addison is prepared to furnish the Meeting with *chapter and verse* of the thousands of passages which he asserts are contained in the New testament—or, if he instance but a few of each, we can easily refer to them, test them, and, if accurate, accept them as *proofs*, and give him credit for the remainder; but, according to the "Regulation" I have just read to you, I may not, as Chairman, allow "mere assertions" to usurp the place of "proofs". [Repeated applause.

ADDISON. I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, of the accuracy of my assertions; and also, of my being able to substantiate them, from the New covenant; though I am not, on the instant, prepared to quote "chapter and verse" of even a title of them—nor was I aware that any "Regulation" of the proceedings of this Meeting required anything of the kind. [Hear, hear!

Chairman. Then, with all due deference to you, Mr. Addison, I am bound to call upon some other gentleman to take up the matter; as your assurances are *pre-judged*, by the Committee of Management, to be insufficient. It is not, Mr. Addison, that I, personally, doubt the accuracy of your statements (I know you too well for that) but, simply because you cannot *now*, "on the instant", substantiate them, that I am compelled, as Chairman, under pre-arranged "Regulations", to object against your proceeding with a string of "mere assertions", however accurate they may be.

It is not enough, that You on my left know, that the passages alluded to exist in such abundance; your Opponents also must know them, and they, through me, *demand* them. [Applause.

Is anyone else in a position to support Mr. Addison's assertions, *with the requisite proofs*?

Rev. S. BUTLER. Yes, Mr. Chairman, with multitudes of proofs! [Cheers] I regret exceedingly, Sir, that our venerable father in the ministry, who has but just returned to town, had not due notice of this Meeting; in fact, Sir, we have not even had an opportunity of placing in his hands a Copy of the "Regulations" agreed upon: I met Mr. Addison, accidentally, on my way hither, and knowing him to be a tower of strength, I pressed him into service; requesting him, in my stead, to Open the Discussion; consequently, Mr. Addison appears before the Meeting unprepared, as it regards "chapter and verse"; nevertheless, Sir, we rejoice to have him in our midst; for, he is a second Apollos—"mighty in the scriptures". [Cheers] However, Mr. Chairman, foreseeing, from the "Regulations", that we should be called upon to support our assertions by scripture testimonies, a few of us undertook to divide the labor of collecting Texts, under separate heads;* and we have now, Sir, come prepared, to prove to you, to our opponents, to this highly respectable assembly, that the UNITY OF THE GODHEAD is one of the leading doctrines taught throughout the Bible. [Applause.

* It does not appear that the gentlemen had taken the pains of running over their Examples together, previous to the public Meeting; or, we should scarcely have had any unnecessary repetitions of the same text, from different speakers. *Reporter.*