

**OF GOD, OR OF THE DIVINE MIND
AND OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE
TRINITY, ALSO OF PANTHEISM; IN
A SERIES OF LETTERS TO AN
UNDERGRADUATE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649594627

Of God, or of the Divine Mind and of the Doctrine of the Trinity, Also of Pantheism; In a Series of Letters to an Undergraduate by John Penrose

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

JOHN PENROSE

**OF GOD, OR OF THE DIVINE MIND
AND OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE
TRINITY, ALSO OF PANTHEISM; IN
A SERIES OF LETTERS TO AN
UNDERGRADUATE**

OF GOD;
OR
OF THE DIVINE MIND.
AND OF THE
DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY;
ALSO OF
PANTHEISM.



IN A SERIES OF LETTERS TO AN UNDERGRADUATE.

BY A
TRINITARIAN.

*Quoniam pars horum maxima fallit
Propter opinatus animi, quos addimus ipsi.*

LUCRET. iv. 465, 466.

OXFORD:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. VINCENT.
AND F. & J. RIVINGTON, LONDON.

1840.

CONTENTS.

LETTER I.

That the doctrine to be here stated is an easy doctrine ; and that though our knowledge, and of God especially, is partial and limited, yet no unintelligible or indistinct notion or doctrine concerning him, or indeed concerning anything else, can be properly accounted of as an object of faith. PAGE 1

LETTER II.

Of our knowledge of God, and that he is a personal God : and also that he was in Christ personally, or that Christ is God. PAGE 13

LETTER III.

Of the same subject, or of Christ as discriminated from every other human being whatever. PAGE 28

LETTER IV.

Of the moral and religious uses of this doctrine of the personalization of God in Christ, or of Christ's divinity. PAGE 33

LETTER V.

Of the history and origin of this doctrine of Christ's divinity ; and of the coincidence of both the doctrine and the language of the New Testament, and of St. John in particular, with our own. PAGE 42

LETTER VI.

Of the objection that the worship of Christ is inconsistent with the doctrine of the divine unity, and that the doctrine of the divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is a tritheistical doctrine. Also of the objections to the use of the words Trinity, substance, and person. PAGE 50

LETTER VII.

Of the doctrine of the Unitarians: and this under two heads— first, of the practical character and import of our difference from them in the worship of Christ; and, secondly, of the statement to be made of the theoretical difference between our doctrine of the Trinity and their doctrine of God.	PAGE 59
---	---------

LETTER VIII.

Of Pantheism.	PAGE 70
-----------------------	---------

LETTER IX.

Of the reasons why God was in Christ by miracle, or with sanc- tions out of the common course of worldly events.	PAGE 76
---	---------

LETTER X.

Concluding observations on the moral and religious use and appli- cation of the doctrine laid down.	PAGE 8
--	--------

NOTES.

A. Of the distinctions drawn by the Fathers between Knowledge and Faith.	PAGE 89
B. Of the question as to the mode in which the doctrine of our Saviour's divinity was taught by himself and by his immediate disciples.	PAGE 90
C. Extract, illustrative of the doctrine of archetypal ideas, from Norris's Sermon's.	PAGE 93
D. Of the reasons for personalizing God, as stated by Mr. Norton.	PAGE 95
E. Of Dr. Whately's statement concerning the meaning of the word Person, in the doctrine of the Trinity; and of his observation that this doctrine is indistinctly explained.	PAGE 96
F. Of the use of the words Person and Distinction in speaking of God, and of the Divine Nature.	PAGE 98
G. Of the identity of meaning in the words unity and consecutive, when spoken of God.	PAGE 102
H. Of the evidence of miracles, as affected by the doctrine of the Divine mind, as stated before.	PAGE 107

OF GOD, &c.

LETTER I.

That the doctrine to be here stated is an easy doctrine, and that, though our knowledge, and of God especially, is partial and limited, yet no unintelligible, or indistinct notion or doctrine concerning Him, or indeed concerning anything else, can be properly accounted of as an object of faith.

MY DEAR SIR,

This doctrine of God, or of the Divine mind, on which you consult me, or this inquiry into what we may know, and what we cannot know, either from revelation or reason, concerning the nature or being of our Supreme Parent and Lord, is doubtless always to be approached with the most reverential feeling and care. And yet I can assure you that there is nothing in it, at which any humble and pious searcher for truth needs to alarm himself. Although it has been very unreasonably made one of the hardest, it is yet, if disentangled from the extraneous controversies which have been fastened to it, one of the easiest doctrines imaginable.^a—Strange, indeed, if it were otherwise. For, of what GOD is, almost all may be alike cognizant, or are alike ignorant. We know nothing of

^a "The faith of the Church was at first, and might be still, a natural, easy thing. Heretics brought in philosophy and metaphysics."—Waterland's Works, by Van Mildert, vol. i. pt. ii. p. 213.

him from his works, except through the human analogies of wisdom and goodness, and power and design, a book which is open to almost all. Also, what he hides from us concerning himself, he hides from all equally. He is no less incomprehensible to the divine than to the mechanic, and all mere words about him without knowledge, serve only to darken, not to illuminate. Neither yet is this less true of what he teaches us concerning himself in his word, than of what he teaches by his works. The relations which we bear to him as he is our Father, our Redeemer, and our Comforter, are relations which we are taught, and can only be taught, through human analogies, analogies altogether kindred to those which we discern in his works. And so also in regard to those in themselves necessarily incomprehensible relations which subsist in himself. The relations of the Father to the Son, or of the Son to the Father, or of the Spirit to the mind which breathes it forth—all this is clearly the language of human, and not only of human, but also of very ordinary and intelligible analogies; not less intelligible than the universally recognised analogy between the immense and incomprehensible designer of the works of creation, and the maker of a watch.

I will, therefore, endeavour to state to you both clearly and easily what our knowledge on this most sacred subject, namely, of God, or what we may call the Divine Nature, really is. Of course I do not mean to state anything of what, as being inscrutable, or incomprehensible, cannot be stated; but to state what we know, and though briefly, all we know, and where our knowledge ends, of all those relations of God to the world and to man; or, in other words, of all those analogies between the Divine and the human; which we are taught either by God's works, or by his word, to know and believe. And

this I will state in especial reference to our own doctrine of the Trinity, which in truth comprises the whole case. You say of this doctrine, that though you would be no less shocked than I should be to surrender it, and feel that you cannot honour Christ enough, unless you honour him as you honour the Father, nor account of the sanctifying Spirit of Grace as less than divine, you have only a confused or indistinct intelligence of the words which you use. I will try to shew you, therefore, both that the meaning which we may and ought to attach to these words is clear and precise, and also that the words themselves are correct words; and I shall moreover have the more satisfaction in the task which I thus set myself, because it will afford me many opportunities of referring to the book by Professor Norton, which you have sent me.^b It is very able and learned, and is evidently, I think, the work of a good man, and of a man who has the love of truth at his heart. Every thing else which I have to premise, if indeed this may not be collected from what I have already said, is, that I assume throughout the plain logical maxim, that no unintelligible proposition can ever be an object of faith; and therefore that we can never have any business, and that it never can be of any use, to make any propositions about God or the Trinity, or indeed about anything else, of which we cannot understand clearly what we mean by them. Of course this maxim is not meant to imply, that we can have no belief except of things, *about*, or *concerning* which, we understand everything. If so, we could believe nothing. No truth can possibly be clearer than this; nor can there be any truth more indispensable to faith itself, or to our protection from the great error or weakness, of either assuming what we cannot know to be

^b Statement of reasons for not believing the doctrine of Trinitarians, by Andrews Norton.—Cambridge U. S. 1833.