

THE
DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY,

BRIEFLY AND IMPARTIALLY EXAMINED

IN THE LIGHT

OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY.

BY W. B. GREENE.

*For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are
all things : to Him be glory forever. Amen.*
SAINT PAUL.

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NOTE.

This Tract commences and ends abruptly, because it was written, not to stand alone by itself, but to form one of a series of Articles on *Providence, the Will of Man, and Necessity*, the three great Powers that govern the World. I may take occasion at some future time, to print the other Tracts of the series.

W. B. G.

DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

WE read in the seventh chapter of the twelfth book of the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle: "Thought in itself, is thought concerning that which is best in itself: and the thought which is most, is concerning that which is most. The mind knows itself through the perception of that which is intelligible; for it becomes intelligible through reflection and thought: so that the intelligence and the intelligible are one and the same thing. For intelligence is that which is able to comprehend the intelligible, and the existing. And being thus capable, it exercises its energy: so that this especially belongs to that which the intelligence seems to possess as divinest, and thought is the most agreeable and perfect thing.

"If then God possesses in such perfection, eternally, what we possess but for a time, it is wonderfully beautiful; but it is yet more so, if he possesses more than this. Now he does possess more, and in this way, he possesses in addition *Life: for the action of Intelligence is Life*; and He is that action; therefore, the action in itself is his perfect and eternal Life."

These sentences teach that God is to be regarded as Supreme Intelligence; and that, because he is both intelligent and absolute, he is possessed of Self-consciousness.—In few words:

God is Supreme intelligence, and has, therefore, a Supreme Knowledge of Himself: in this Supreme cognition, that which Knows is the same with that which is Known: we may distinguish, therefore, between the Knower, the Known, and the act of Knowing.

God as Knower, is the Absolute Cause, the hidden Father, unrevealed in the depths of his own essence, the Supreme Intelligence.

God as Known to himself, is the Supremely Intelligible, is the eternal Logos or Word, that eternal revelation of God to himself, which is his perfect image, and wherein, as in a mirror, the unrevealed Father eternally contemplates himself.

God as the act of Knowing, is the Divine Life, or the Spirit of God, which is dependent for its being upon the concurrence in the Absolute, of the Intelligence and the Intelligible, the hidden Father and the revealed Word, and which, therefore, is said to proceed from the Father and the Word. "For the action of Intelligence is Life."

I shall now proceed to demonstrate this to be the ground and origin of the doctrine of *the Trinity* as it has been maintained in India, Egypt, Persia, Greece, and by the Fathers of the Christian Church.

In the *Laws of Menu*, a work dating back perhaps as far as any of the books of the Old Testament, it is written: "That which is, the Invisible Cause, self-existing, but unperceived, becoming masculine from neuter, is celebrated among all creatures by the name of Brahma. That God, having dwelled in the egg through revolving years, *Himself meditating upon Himself*, divided it into two equal parts, and from these halves formed the heavens and the

earth, placing in the midst the subtle ether, the eight points of the world, and the permanent receptacle of waters." In this extract we find the ground of the Indian doctrine of the Trinity. At first, the Supreme Being is neuter, that is, he is wrapped up in the undistinguishable darkness of his own essence, and exists without internal distinctions; but, afterward, from neuter he becomes masculine; and, as masculine is the correlative of feminine, the implied thought is complete. The distinction of the sexes in the Supreme Being, is evidently effected in the way explained; for how was the neuter Brahm occupied through revolving years, before he became transformed into the masculine Brahma? The text affirms that he was himself *meditating on himself*; that is, that the neuter Brahm was self-conscious, that is again, that he was the object of his own contemplation. In the act of self-consciousness, he distinguished in himself the subject and object of thought, the Intelligence and the Intelligible, the Knower and the Known; and thus Brahm became Brahma, the active Intelligence:—of Sacti, or Parasacti, the Supremely Intelligible, which is female, we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Let us now continue our quotations from the Laws of Menu, endeavoring to learn how Brahm came in the beginning to find himself in the egg: "He, the Supreme Being, having willed from his own substance to produce divers creatures, first *with a thought* created the waters, and in them he placed a productive seed. This seed became an egg shining like gold, as brilliant as the star with a thousand glories, and in it the Supreme Being was himself born under the name of Brahma, the great forefather of all beings. The waters have been called Nara, or the spirit of God; and, because they were his first place of motion, he thence is named Narayana, or he that moves upon the waters." Without delaying to point out the analogies which exist between the last sentence and a passage in the Genesis of Moses, we will state that the first creative act in the Egyptian, as well as in the Indian system, was the production of an egg. According to Eusebius, the first creative act, recorded in the Egyptian cosmogony, was the issuing of an egg from the mouth of Amoun, while he still remained neuter—that before he became male and female; for the distinction of sexes in the Supreme Being, was an article in the Egyptian as well as in the Indian creed. This Egyptian egg produced a deity that was called *Ptha*. But who was Ptha? what were his offices and his functions? The mythology answers the question. "Ptha was the Divine Intelligence sent forth in the beginning by the Supreme Being, to create all things." Thus the Egyptian egg produced Ptha, and the Indian egg produced Brahma. But Ptha and Brahma are precisely the same personage, as far as the metaphysical foundation of the doctrine goes; for we find from the Indian commentators on the Laws of Menu, that Brahma was the creative energy of the Supreme Being: and thus the full action of the Supreme is clearly represented as preceded by an act of intelligence in both traditions. All this may be made clearer by an extract from the letters of the younger Champollion: he says, "In the temple of Kalabschi, in Nubia, I discovered a new generation of Gods, a generation that completes the circle of the forms of Amoun, who is the point of reunion of all the Divine Essences. *Amoun Ra*, the Supreme Being, primordial, is entitled, because he is his own Father, the husband of his Mother, the goddess *Mouth*, who is his female-half, enclosed in his own essence, which is both male and female: all the other Egyptian gods are but forms of these two constituent principles, taken isolatedly. The point of departure of the Egyptian mythology is a triad, formed of the three parts of Amoun Ra, viz: Amoun, the male and father; Mouth, the female and mother; and Khons, the infant son. The signification of this triad is not difficult to discern. Amoun Ra is considered as *self-existing*, that is as the ground and origin of his own being: he is represented therefore, as having created himself; for that which is self-existing, may be regarded as constantly self-creative. We can conceive, therefore, of Amoun Ra in two distinct relations, one of which is active, and the other passive; for that which is self-existing is the *cause* of its own being, and, by necessity also, the result of its own creative energy. We may regard Amoun Ra, either in his active character as creator of himself, or, in his passive character as created by himself: for, if he created himself, he is, as creator, the cause of his own existence, and, as created, the result of his own creative energy. And, because the creator, the creative energy, and the creature, are, in this case, all the same identical thing, Amoun Ra may be considered either as his own

father, his own mother, or his own son; or, again, as the husband of his mother, or the wife of his father.

If we recollect now, that Eusebius says expressly that the egg which produced Ptha (the same with Khons) issued from the mouth of Amoun while he was yet in the neuter state, *before the division into two sexes*, and that Ptha is the out-going Divine Intelligence, we shall discern that the distinction of the sexes, the birth of Amoun Ra from himself, comes at the same moment with the outbreak of the *Divine Intelligence*. The meaning begins now to shine out. The fact that the egg containing the Divine Intelligence, preceded the separation of Amoun Ra into his male and female halves, brings back the Egyptian tradition into the general tradition of philosophy of which we have spoken. Amoun Ra was a cause, but an Intelligent cause; and his self-creation was the production of himself to himself as the object of his own intelligence in self-consciousness—in other words the goddess Mouth was Amoun Ra himself as the object of his own Supreme Knowledge.

These thoughts were not too philosophical for the ancient Egyptians, for it is probable that the priests of the valley of the Nile, carried their metaphysical speculations beyond anything of which we have any conception. If we could give full credit to the fragments attributed to Hermes Trismegistus we might prove at once that the course of reasoning among the priests of Thebes and Memphis, was as we have explained it. For, in any matter of controversy, if the writings of one party remain, we can learn from them, on the principle of opposition, what thought was held by the other party. A denial, therefore, is as good as an affirmation, provided it be clear and explicit; for the express denial shows that the writer wishes to overturn some opinion already existing.—But we will give the passage without further preface: "Therefore (says Hermes Trismegistus) God is *not* intelligible to himself; for as he is no other thing from that which in that case would be understood, he *cannot* be understood by himself." We must not suppose that the priests of Egypt were ignorant of Divine Truth because they taught the people to worship cats and unions; for we have the testimony of Herodotus that "the inhabitants of Egypt believed in a God, self-existent, and from eternity to eternity;" and also of Jamblichus "that, according to the Egyptians, the first of the gods existed alone, before all beings, that he is the source of all Intelligibles and of every thing that is Intelligible. That he is the first principle, sufficing for himself, and the Father of all essences."

We here confess, however, to a certain exaggeration on our part of the influence of the metaphysical basis on which the ancient creeds were built; for we have attributed to the Egyptians and Indians a religion more spiritual in many respects than the one they possessed. For, if the Egyptians and Indians believed in one God, and were able to speak of him in a style of sublimity which has seldom been surpassed, even in christian ages, still it was the one God of the Pantheists, a God identical in one aspect with the visible universe. And no religion is so opposed to the welfare of man in this world and in the world to come, as Pantheism; for men and nations may be materialists and atheists, and still be moral and upright; but they cannot be pantheists, as is abundantly taught by the lessons of history, without becoming sooner or latter divided into classes of tyrants and slaves, without giving way to all evil passion and sensuality; without, in fine, realizing the picture which the apostle Paul draws in his epistle to the Romans of those who knowing God, worship him not as God. Besides this inherent perverseness of Pantheism, which manifested itself in nearly all the nations of antiquity, dividing men into castes, and causing one portion of the race to exist for the comfort and sensual indulgence of another, it has in later times manifested another (if it be another) perverseness, in exalting the minds of those who hold it, making them to think they are spiritual, knowing more than others, and of a superior nature to the mass of men, because they have more of the God in them, while there is no class in modern society so ignorant, so conceited, so wanting in the power of eternal things, as those who conceive themselves to be especially pervaded by the Divinity. And here I will take occasion

to say, in passing, that if any reader will show my views to be pantheistic, or show that pantheism can fair]y be deduced from my premises—if any reader will show that pantheism is contained explicitly or implicitly, in my affirmations, no catholic under the censure of the pope, and in the presence of the officers of the holy inquisition, ever retracted his words with the humility and mortification with which I will retract mine. After what I have now said, I shall consider it altogether ungenerous in any one who shall charge me with pantheism, if he does not, at the same time, point out the sentences in which the pantheism is found, thus enabling me to profit by the criticism. If the reader will pardon this digression, we will proceed with our exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity.

An old English theologian remarks, " There be three illustrious and dazzling unions in Scripture. That of three persons in one God, *essentially*; that of two distinct natures in one person, *hypostatically*; and that of two distinct natures and persons by one spirit, *mystically*." We will not at this time stop to inquire the chapter and verse of Scripture in which these unfamiliar words and distinctions are found, but will use the remark and the thought conveyed in it, by way of illustration. If we suppose (admitting the truth of the above distinctions for the sake of argument) that our Lord was *one* with the Father in the same way as it is said the three persons in the Trinity are one, that is, *essentially*, then our Lord would have been the Father, and his body would have been the body of God. And if this union was an essential union, God must always have been, and must always be, clothed in matter; for that which is essential in God, if it exists once, must subsist always. Again, the disciples are *one* in Christ, they are all members of his body; he prayed for them—"that they all may be *one*, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may be *one* in us." If now we-suppose this last union (the mystical) to be also essential, all the disciples will be Christ, and, as Christ is God, all the disciples will be God, and God will be the disciples. Thus by confounding the distinctions, and making these "three illustrious and dazzling unions" to be of the same nature, we fall at once upon Pantheism, and hold our souls, our active powers, to be God, and our bodies to be the bodies of God, that is, God himself under a passive form.¹ And because our bodies are of like material with the rest of nature, and because a continual transmission and transformation is going on between our bodies and nature by assimilation, we generalize our reasoning, and affirm the whole material universe to be the body of God. A road to Pantheism, similar to this, has been travelled by men of all ages.

Not altogether unlike this was the doctrine of India and Egypt. Amoun Ra is Supreme Intelligence, but not always; and the Supremely Intelligible of the Egyptians is not always, as in our exposition, the infinite Wisdom, or Word, of God, but is oftentimes the *material universe*. The Egyptians did not hold to two distinct principles, spirit and matter, but, as Amoun Ra and Mouth were *one*, they held that matter was Amoun Ra considered passively, that is, it was the Supreme God in a visible form, that is again, it was an emanation from, or aspect of his substance. Mouth was nature. This same system prevailed in later ages of heathenism. We get a good idea of it from a paragraph of Pliny quoted by Dupuis. "The world, says Pliny, or what we otherwise call the world, which in its vast extent embraces all beings, is an eternal and immense God. It has never been produced and shall never be destroyed. To seek beyond this, is to enter upon a labor useless to man, and one that transcends his powers. Behold the being that is truly holy, the being that is eternal, which contains everything in itself, which is all in all, or, rather, is itself all. *It is the work of nature, and nature itself*." The last sentence deserves particular attention. According to Pliny, the world is the cause of its own existence, and the effect of its own causative energy. The world labors eternally in, and upon itself, and is, at once, the workman and the work—the universal cause of all the effects it contains. It is what is, has been and shall be, at once cause and

¹ Thus the Familists, a century or more ago, affirmed themselves to be, Christed into Christ, and Goded into God.

effect, cause of its own existence, and effect of its own energy. Thus, as we explained the origin of the doctrine of the Trinity from the operation of an intelligent and absolute cause, so here we may explain this new Trinity, from the operation of an unintelligent cause—if any such can be imagined. The *active powers* of Nature are the first term, *Nature itself*, as resulting from the activity, is the second, and the *activity* of the powers is the third. The confusion in the ancient religions, comes from the fact that some individuals possessed the true doctrine of the Logos of God, and held God to be intelligent and alive, while the mass believed the powers of nature to be the true God. As Amoun is male and female, so Mouth, who is Amoun, and material nature, is female and male; and the word Mouth expressed in the Egyptian tongue, this material Trinity; for, according to Plutarch, it signified, "I have proceeded forth from myself." The Greek Athene was the same with the Goddess Mouth, but considered in her higher, her intellectual character; and if we consider the account of the procession of Mouth from Amoun Ra, through the action of intelligence, we shall see the origin of the account of the procession of Minerva from the brain of Jupiter. But Mouth is considered in her material character in the famous inscription at Sais, "I Neith (Mouth, Isis, or Nature) am all that has been; is, or shall be: no mortal has lifted the veil that covers me."

And let not the reader suppose this material Trinity to be altogether obsolete, for Victor Cousin has reproduced it. "The God of consciousness," says Cousin, "is not an abstract God, a solitary king, dwelling far from creation, on the throne of an eternal silence, and of an absolute existence, which seems to be the negation even of existence: he is a God at once 'true and real, *at once substance and cause, being substance only so far forth as cause, and cause so far forth as substance*, that is to say, absolute cause, one and many, eternity and time, space and number, essence and life, individuality and totality, *at the summit of being, and at its lowest degree, at once infinite and finite, at once God, nature, and humanity.*" Here we have a triple divinity, who is a sort of monster, who is, in the words of Leroux (and Leroux' divinity is no better) God, properly so called as to the head, humanity as to the body, and nature as to the extremities.

Herein lies the secret of Pantheism: it denies that God is alive and self-conscious, and therefore denies his personality: And because it denies this, it denies that he exists to himself as the Knower, the Known and the act of Knowing: instead of which, it affirms a sort of material trinity in which the visible world takes the place of the eternal Logos. This is the common sin of all the ancient religions, except the Hebrew, and of all the modern pantheistic philosophies. One of the ancient philosophers defines the Deity in a pantheistic manner by saying, "It is not one as a minimum is one, but it is one as containing *all things*." God, according to Pythagoras, who learned his pantheism in Egypt, "is a soul which animates all parts of this great universe, who is spread everywhere, who gives life to animals, and being to all that exists." Dupuis says that "the world in the Egyptian system was regarded as a great divinity, composed of the assemblage of a crowd of gods or partial causes, who were nothing other than the great body called the world, or the Universe-God." The same doctrine prevailed in Greece, for Orpheus wrote that all things were made by one Godhead, of three names, but he wrote also, that this God *is all things*. The doctrine of an intellectual Trinity was indeed known in India and Egypt, but it was not known generally; else when would have been the progress of the race from that time to this?

Enough, for the present, of India and Egypt— let us speak of Greece. The system of Plato is thus stated by Knapp: "God first produced the *ideal world*; that is, his infinite understanding conceived of the existence of the world, and formed, as it were, the plan of the creation. The real world was then formed after this ideal world, as its model; and this was done by uniting the soul of the world, which proceeded from the Divine Being, with matter, by which the world became an animated, sensitive, rational, creature, pervaded and held together by this rational soul. The three principles of Plato were these: 1st. *The Supreme God*, whom he calls the Father; 2nd. The Divine Understanding, which he calls *Intelligence*,

the Creator, the Word, Savior, and Wisdom; and 3rd. *The soul of the world*." All this would be very well, and we could go on easily with our discussion, if Plato taught one system only; but he seems to have set forth many. For example, in the *Timeus*, the dialogue from which it is probable that Knapp drew his exposition, Plato says, "As for the author and Father of the universe, it is difficult to discover him, and impossible, after having discovered him, to make him known to every body. We must therefore, seek the model which the author of the universe made use of, to know whether he produced the world after the eternal and immutable, or after the generated and transitory model. But if the world be beautiful and its author good, it is clear that he contemplated the eternal model; but if the contrary be true (which indeed no man is permitted to assert) it must have been the generated model that he contemplated. Now everybody recognizes that he followed the eternal model, for the world is the most beautiful of engendered things, and its author the best of causes; and since the world has been produced in this way, it has been formed after an immutable model conceived by reason and intelligence. If these principles are true, *we must conclude that the world is an image*." All this is plain, and goes to substantiate the exposition of Knapp; but in the *Parmenides*, Plato speaks otherwise, and says expressly that the world is not an image, and that visible things are not at all similar to their ideas which are in the eternal Word. "Nothing, therefore, (says Plato in the *Parmenides*) can be similar to a form (idea) nor a form to any other. For in this case, another form will always appear, besides some particular form: and if this again should become similar to another, another still would be required; and a new form never would cease to take place as long as any form becomes similar to its participant. *Things, therefore, do not partake of forms (ideas) through similitude*." But how O Plato, if things be not *similar* to their ideas or forms, can the ideal world be a pattern according to which actual things are formed and moulded. Evidently Plato contradicts himself; for the visible cannot be the image of the invisible, and yet be altogether destitute of *similarity* to it. Perhaps Plato endeavored to perform a metaphysical feat, and to separate himself into his male and female halves!

Let us notice, however, that the Platonic system, even as the Egyptian and Indian traditions, represents all things as beginning with an act of Intelligence; for, whatever obscurity may rest upon the question of the method in which Plato represents the Divine Mind to have operated, there can be no doubt as to his views in relation to the reality of such an operation. This fact shows that we are still in the full stream of the universal tradition. But let us notice particularly that the intelligible object with Plato is *ideal*, and not *material*; so that henceforth there is no reason why the great tradition should degenerate into Pantheism.

Let us notice also that Plato calls the Word, *Wisdom*; and that he attributes to it the functions of creation and Salvation. Something very similar to this may be found in the Proverbs of Solomon:

"The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth,
"By understanding hath he established the heavens."

In another place Solomon speaks of this Wisdom, and says it was with God before the creation of the visible world, thus treating of the same problem that engaged the attention of philosophers in India, Egypt, and Greece.

"I Wisdom, dwell with prudence,
"And find out knowledge of witty inventions.
"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way,
"Before his works of old.
"I was set up from everlasting,
"From the beginning, or ever the earth was.
"When he gave the sea his decree,

"That the waters should not pass his commandment,
"When he appointed the foundations of the earth,—
"Then I was by him, as one brought up with him,
"And was I daily his delight, rejoicing always before him
"Rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth;
"And my delights were with the sons of men."

These passages ascribe creative energy to Wisdom, or the Word, as plainly as they would if they said, By, or according to, the Word, all things were made. The book of Proverbs attributes also a life-giving power, or power of salvation, to the Word or Wisdom of God. "Whoso findeth me findeth life:—understanding is a well spring of life to him that hath it: hold fast to instruction, she is thy life." What indeed is the rejoicing of Wisdom in the habitable parts of the earth, or what are her delight with the sons of men, if they be not that intellectual light, which flows forth from the Word, and is the life that is in the Word—if they be not the moving of that intellectual light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world?

The Platonic school, though it degenerated into pantheism, never altogether lost sight of the higher doctrine. Proclus says, "My master Syrien had taken up with the opinion of Plotinus, who placed Intelligence immediately after Unity, while we must place *Life* between them. Unity, in going forth from itself produces *Life*; but this outgoing is, at the same time, a return upon itself; and that is Intelligence. Unity, Life, and Intelligence, are all three God."—All this is equally explicit with the words of Aristotle already quoted, where that great philosopher affirms that God is Intelligible to himself, and that the energy of the Divine Intelligence whereby it becomes Intelligible to itself, is the Divine Life. Averroes, in commenting upon Aristotle, says:

"The Intelligence which gathers in, is virtual Intelligence; the Intelligence which is gathered in is the Intelligible. The Intelligence which is the first prime mover, has an independent existence. The Intelligence gathers in from the Intelligible only what itself is."—

Time would fail us if we should endeavor to show the influence which the half page we have quoted from Aristotle, has had upon the Jewish and Arabian philosophers, upon the schoolmen, and upon the modern Germans. Suffice it to say that it has been copied literally into a commentary which now forms a part of the Kabbala, that it pervades the whole system of Schelling, and that it continually manifests itself here and there in the writings of the more profound philosophers—[for example, Malebranche says: "God knows as well as Spirits, but he thinks not after the manner in which they think. He is himself the immediate object of his own cognition."]

Nay, further, according to Aristotle, "the action of intelligence is *Life*, and God is that action." Aristotle says moreover, that the separation of the Supreme Being into Supreme Intelligence and the Supremely Intelligible is effected through *Life*, which is the energy of Intelligence. Now will it be necessary for us to point out the analogies which exist between this statement of the philosopher, and the statement in the beginning of the gospel of John? What is the *Life*, that is in the Word, or in God as Supremely Intelligible to Himself—this *life*, that is the *light* of men, enlightening every man that cometh into the world? What is the ground of this distinction in the Supreme Being, by which the Word was said to be God, and yet *with* him? And why did the apostle, to express his thought, borrow a technical term from the philosophy of Plato? Is it possible that any one can fail to discern the continuity of the great tradition which arose in India and Egypt, and, passing through Greece, became transformed by the higher revelation of Christianity? Verily the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehends it with great difficulty. Is it at all astonishing that men, in the weakness of their understandings, should have so perverted the doctrine of the Trinity as to

believe in a trinity of *persons*. God is evidently not in three persons, but in one person, and here is the ground of the whole doctrine; for, because he is a person, he is triple. God is the Absolute Cause, and therefore is an efficient will; he is likewise Intelligent Cause, and is consequently, self-conscious; but in the act of self-consciousness, this *one* will, one person, discerns itself as the *subject*, the *object*, and the *act* of thought. It is personality, therefore, that is the ground of trinity, and if there were three persons in God, he would have a ninefold existence, or subsist in triple trinity. There is no trinity of persons revealed in Scripture, in fact the Trinity is not clearly revealed in Scripture at all. It is from philosophy that we gather this great article of belief, and philosophy furnishes no ground for a trinity of persons. The Scriptures indeed speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but they nowhere say that the two last are persons in the Trinity; and, when they say our Lord is the incarnation of the eternal Word, they do not say that he is that Word essentially, for one Lord had a personal existence, and was a man, but what *personal* existence has the Wisdom or Word of God?

The early christians gave the Platonic signification to the term, *the Word of God*. Thus Tertullian says: "For God was before all things alone—being both world and place and everything to himself. Alone, because there is nothing exterior to him, and yet not indeed alone, because he had in himself his reason: for God is rational, and reason was first in him, and thus all things are from him, and this reason is his sensation. The Greeks term it Logos, which we translate *Word*, and thus our people, for brevity's sake, say, 'In the beginning the Word was with God,' though it would be more proper to say, reason, since God was not speaking from the beginning, although rational; and this he was, even before the beginning; for the very word spoken, consisting of reason, shows the prior existence of this latter." Theophilus affirms also, that "God through his reason or word (Logos) and wisdom (Sophias) made all things." Justin Martyr goes still further, and says, "Those good men who lived before Jesus Christ, were in their circumstances Christians; for all men who lived according to the seed of the Logos, lived *rationally*, but, as the universal Logos is the same with Christ, they lived in a Christian manner, and are not unworthy the name of Christian. Such were Socrates and Heraclites among the Greeks; Abraham and others among the Jews." Lactantius says, "The word is called Logos by the Greeks, and this term is more appropriate than ours, because it signifies *reason* as well as *Word*. Now the Son of God is the Reason and Wisdom of his Father, as well as his Word. This divine Word has not been altogether unknown to the philosophers who knew nothing of christianity. Zeno says that it created the universe, and ranged the parts which compose it in due order." Saint Augustin says, "We believe, we maintain, we teach, as a dogma of our faith, that the Father has begotten the Word—that is to say his Wisdom, the creator of all things." In the following sentences, Saint Augustin shows himself to be under the influence of the passage from the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle which we quoted at the beginning of this tract. He says, "For the Father has a Son, and nevertheless he is not Son; and the Son has a Father but is not himself Father. Now that which is affirmed of him without relation to another, he is that which he has. *Thus as life in itself, and without relation, is affirmed of him, he is the Life itself which he has.*" The fathers of the church did not suppose themselves to be maintaining a newly revealed doctrine, but to be in the even tenor of the ancient and universal tradition of philosophy. Thus they did not speak of the heathen philosophies with the contempt so common to the superficial theologians of the present day. Justin Martyr notes the fact that Orpheus called the Deity the *Divine Word*; and Lactantius says, "Trismegistus, who has discovered, *I know not how*, almost all truths, has described the force and majesty of the *Word* in several places." Philastrius, mentioned by Augustin, says in his tract on the Heretics, "The Trinity of Christianity was asserted from the foundation of the world, and the truth of religion taught everywhere, by the faithful, without intermission." And such indeed seems to have been the case. Plotinus, of the Alexandrian school, testifies to the same fact: "The doctrine of a Trinity (he says), Father, Mind, and Soul, is no new invention, but an ancient tenet."

It appears, in very truth, that the doctrine of the TRINITY, far from being founded upon unapproachable mystery, is easily discovered by human reason, and that it has in fact been thus discovered FROM THE BEGINNING AND EVERYWHERE. The people of India worshiped, and still worship, idols with three heads. It is true that "instructed Hindus recognise in fact only one Supreme Being, whom they call Bramah (or more properly, *Brahman*, in the neuter gender): they suppose he manifests his power by his Divine spirit, which they call Vischnou, (literally, *he that penetrates all things*), and Narayan, *he that moves upon the waters*: but many, incapable of receiving this doctrine, when they conceive the Divine Power as being exercised in creation, call it *Brahma*; and when exercised in destruction, they give it a thousand different names, as *Siva, Iswara, Mahadeva, &c.*" The common form of the doctrine recognizes Brahma the Creator; Vischnou the Preserver, and also the Saviour, for this second Person of the Indian Trimourti has been incarnated some nine times already to save the world fast tending to ruin; and *Siva the Destroyer*, or, rather the *Changer of Forms*, who seems to be identical with the Egyptian Sevek Ra.

In the Bouddhist theology, "*Adi-Bouddha*" (the Supreme Intelligence) makes use of Dharma (its Thought or Law) to produce *Sanga* (Multiplicity, and the bond that unites this Multiplicity within itself). The people of Thibet, who are worshipers of Bouddha, acknowledge the following Trinity, viz.: 1. The Supreme God, 2. The Divine Law, 3. The Universe, created by God, and coordinated by this Law."

" In the Chinese Trinity, *Tao*, the ineffable and triple essence, created the heavens and the earth, dividing himself into three persons, one of which was charged with the *production* of the world, another with its *arrangement*, and the third with the *maintenance of regular successions*. The following passage may be found in the writings of Lao-Tseu, "The *Tao* has produced one, one has produced two, two has produced three, three has produced all beings.

"Among the Egyptians, *Osiris, Isis, and Horus*, represented Intelligence, the World, and the Image of the world." This Trinity was worshipped as presenting innumerable forms, and as manifesting itself in a multitude of different spheres, even from Supreme Intelligence to the lowest conditions of matter.

According to Guigniaut, the ancient Persians worshiped a Trinity similar to those of the Egyptians and of the Platonic philosophers. The ancient Chaldee Jews, as well as the Kabbalists, asserted the doctrine of a Trinity in the Divine Essence, which they represented by three Jods enclosed in a circle, the Jods denoting *Jah, Jah, Jah*. In the Jetzirah (a portion of the Kabbala, or secret tradition of the Jews,) the first person is called Kather, *the Crown*, or the admirable and profound *Intelligence*; the second Chochma, *Wisdom*, or the intelligence illuminating the creation, and the second glory; and the third *Binah*, or the sanctifying intelligence." Corduero, in his explanations of the Kabbala, says that "the three first Sephiroth were the Crown, Wisdom, and Intelligence, and that these ought to be considered as the same thing." He continues his exposition as follows: "The first represents Knowledge or Science, the second that which knows, and the third that which is known. To explain this identity, we must know that the science of the Creator is not like that of his creatures; for, with these, science is distinct from the subject of science, and bears upon objects which in their turn are distinct from the subject. This is what we designate by these three terms: thought, that which thinks, and that which is thought upon. The Creator is, however, on the contrary, at once the cognition, and that which knows, and that which is known." This exposition, however must be taken with considerable allowance, for the form of expression is evidently a reflection of the passage in the seventh chapter of the twelfth book of the metaphysics of Aristotle, already quoted.

The ancient Persians held the same doctrines. "Numenius says that Zoroaster represented the first person of the Trinity as chief agent, who made all things by his Wisdom and Love." It is said also that "the Magi maintained, concerning the Deity, that he existed in a first, a second, and a third mind. Of these the first was (according to Damascius, who treated of their Theology) the *Paternal mind*, superessential in itself and the principle of all essences; the second was the *Filial mind*, generated by the first, and the Creator of the material world; and the third was the efficient *Wisdom* and *Power* of the other two, to which they gave various denominations. They also held that there were three principles of Minds or Spirits which at length were esteemed Gods; and that the two last of these Trinities proceeded from the first; the persons in which they stiled, *Father*, *Power*, and *Mind*; or, according to others, *Ormases*, *Mitris* and *Arminis*, which they interpret, God, Mind, and Soul."

The Deity was represented by Orpheus in the form of a dragon with three heads, viz.: of a bull, a lion, and a dog, with golden wings upon his shoulders. Indeed the chief deity of the Greeks seems sometimes to have been worshiped under the symbol of a serpent with three heads. The Roman Diana was called Triformis and Tergemina, i. e. Threeformed and Triple, and was represented with three heads; the head of a horse on the right side, of a dog on the left, and a human head in the midst; whence some call her three-headed, and three-faced. Others ascribe to her the likeness of a Dog, a Bull, and a Lion. Proserpine was another three-headed Idol of Rome. She is made to say of herself, "I am called of a three-fold nature, and am also three-headed. Many and various are my forms, and *three* my symbols. I bear *three* similitudes, or images; of the *earth*, the *air*, and *fire*."

Trium Deat, or Lord in Trinity, was worshiped in a most magnificent temple, at Upsal in Sweden, with human sacrifices; and was generally acknowledged by the northern nations. Rodigast was a German Idol of great antiquity, which bore a man's, an ox's, and an eagle's head. The Vandals had a god called Triglaflf, who was represented with three heads. The race of Tartars called Jakuthi, the most numerous people of all Siberia, adore one only invisible God, under three different denominations, which are, *Artugon*, *Schengo-Tengon*, and *Tangara*. By the first was understood the Creator of all things, by the second the God of armies or the Power over all, and by the third Love,.

The Peruvians had an idea of the Trinity in: the Divine Nature (at least when the Europeans first came among them), which they worshiped under the symbol of the sun with three heads. This probably was the Idol, which Acosta in his account of Mexico and Peru, says the inhabitants called Tanga-Tanga (which name seems to bear some analogy with Tangara mentioned above) which they affirmed to signify Three in One, and One in Three.

CONCLUSION.

[" In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word was God. . . . In him (or it²) was Life, and the Life was the light of men."]

I believe, in the Father, the ;Word, and the Life: of whom the Father is God, the Word is God, and the Life is God; Yet are they not three Gods, but one God.

I believe in the Father, the Word, and the Life: one Person, and not three Persons; one God, and not three Gods.

AMEN.

² The pronoun in the original Greek (*auto*), may, in this connection, and with equal propriety, be translated *him* or *it*.