

angels joy, glory without intermission and expiration. We shall never enjoy ourselves fully, till we enjoy God eternally.

OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Q. II. *WHAT rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

Ans. The word of God (which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament) is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

2 Tim. iii. 16. 'All scripture is given by the inspiration of God,' &c. By scripture is understood the sacred book of God. —It is given by divine inspiration; that is, the scripture is not the contrivance of man's brain, but of a divine original. The image of Diana was had in veneration by the Ephesians, because they did suppose it fell from Jupiter, Acts xix. 35. This book then of the holy scripture is to be highly revered and esteemed, because we are sure it came from heaven, 2 Pet. i. 21. The two Testaments are the two lips by which God hath spoken to us.

Q. *How doth it appear that the scriptures have a Jus Divinum, a divine authority stamped upon them?*

Ans. Because the Old and New Testament are the foundation of all religion. If their divinity cannot be proved, the foundation is gone on which we build our faith. I shall therefore endeavour to evince this great truth, that the scriptures are the very word of God. I wonder whence the scriptures should come, if not from God. 1. And bad men could not be the authors of scripture; would their minds be employed in indicting such holy lines? would they declare so fiercely against sin? 2. Good men could not be the authors of scripture. Could they write in such a strain? or could it stand with their grace to counterfeit God's name, and put, *Thus saith the Lord*, to a book of their own devising? 3. Nor could any angel in heaven be the author of scripture, because, 1. The angels pry and search into the abysses of gospel mysteries, 1 Pet. i. 12. which implies their nescience of some parts of scripture; and sure they cannot be authors of that book which themselves do not fully understand. Besides, 2. What angel in heaven durst be so arrogant as to personate God, and say, 'I create,' Isa. lxv. 17. and 'I the Lord have said it,' Numb. xiv. 35. So that it is evident, the pedigree of scripture is sacred, and it could come from none but God himself.

Not to speak of the harmonious consent of all the parts of

scripture, there are seven cogent arguments which may evince it to be the word of God.

1. By its antiquity: It is of ancient standing. The grey hairs of scripture make it venerable. No human histories extant reach further than since Noah's flood; but the holy scripture relates matters of fact that have been from the beginning of the world; it writes of things before time. Now, that is a sure rule of Tertullian, "That which is of the greatest antiquity, *id verum quod primum*, is to be received as most sacred and authentic."

2. We may know the scriptures to be the word of God, by the miraculous preservation of it in all ages. The holy scriptures are the richest jewel that Christ hath left; and the church of God hath kept these public records of heaven, that they have not been lost. The word of God hath never wanted enemies to oppose, and, if possible, to extirpate it. They have given out a law concerning scripture, as Pharaoh did the midwives concerning the Hebrew women's children, to strangle it in the birth; yet God hath preserved this blessed book inviolable to this day. The devil and his agents have been blowing at scripture-light, but could never prevail to blow it out; a clear sign that it was lighted from heaven. Nor hath the church of God, in all revolutions and changes, only kept the scripture that it should not be lost, but that it should not be depraved. The letter of scripture hath been preserved, without any corruption, in the original tongue. The scriptures were not corrupted before Christ's time, for then Christ would never have sent the Jews to the scriptures; but he sends them to the scriptures, John v. 39. 'Search the scriptures.' Christ knew these sacred springs were not muddied with human fancies.

4. The scripture appears to be the word of God, by the matter contained in it. (1.) By its profundity. The mystery of scripture is so abstruse and profound, that no man or angel could have known it, had it not been divinely revealed. That eternity should be born; that he who thunders in the heavens should cry in the cradle; that he who rules the stars, should suck the breasts; that the Prince of life should die; that the Lord of glory should be put to shame; that sin should be punished to the full, yet pardoned to the full; who could ever have conceived of such a mystery, had not the scripture been the oracle to reveal it to us? So, for the doctrine of the resurrection, that the same body which is crumbled into a thousand pieces, should rise *idem numero*, the same individual body, (for esse it were a creation, not a resurrection.) How could such a sacred riddle, above all human disquisition, be known, had not the scripture made a discovery of it? (2.) By its purity. It is, for the matter of it, so full of goodness, justice and sanctity, that it could be

breathed from none but from God; the holiness of it shews it to be of God, it bears his very image. The scripture is compared to silver refined seven times, Psal. xii. 6. This book of God hath no errata in it: it is a beam of the Sun of Righteousness, a crystal stream flowing from the fountain of life. All laws and edicts of men have had their corruptions, but the word of God hath not the least tincture, it is of a meridian splendor, Psal. cxix. 140. 'Thy word is very pure,' like wine that comes from the grape, which is not mixed nor adulterated. It is so pure, that it purifies every thing else, John xvii. 17. 'Sanctify them through thy truth.' The scripture presseth holiness, so as never any book did: it bids us 'live soberly, righteously, godly,' Tit. ii. 12. Soberly, in acts of temperance; righteously, in acts of justice; godly, in the acts of zeal and devotion. It commends to us, 'whatever is just, lovely, and of good report,' Phil. iv. 8. This sword of the Spirit, Eph. vi. 17. cuts down vice. Out of this tower of scripture is thrown down a millstone upon the head of sin. The scripture is the royal law, which commands not only the actions, but affections; it binds the heart to its good behaviour. Where is there such holiness to be found, as is digged out of this sacred mine? who could be the author of such a book but God himself?

4. That the scripture is the word of God, is evident by its predictions; it prophesieth of things to come. This shows the voice of God speaking in it; it was foretold by the prophet, 'A virgin shall conceive,' Isa. vii. 14. and, the 'Messiah shall be cut off,' Dan. ix. 26. The scripture foretels things that should fall out many ages and centuries after; as how long Israel should serve in the iron furnace, and the very day of their deliverance, Exod. xii. 41. 'At the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day, it came to pass, that the host of the Lord went out of Egypt.' This prediction of future things, merely contingent, and not depending upon natural causes, is a clear demonstration of its divine original.

5. The impartiality of those men of God, who wrote the scriptures; they do not spare to set down their own failings. What man that writes an history, would black his own face, viz. record those things of himself, that might stain his reputation; Moses records his own impatience when he struck the rock, and tells us, therefore he could not enter into the land of promise. David writes of his own adultery and bloodshed, which stands as a blot in his scutcheon to succeeding ages. Peter relates his own pusillanimity in denying Christ. Jonah sets down his own passions, 'I do well to be angry to the death.' Surely, had not their pen been guided by God's own hand, they would never have written that which did reflect dishonour upon themselves. Men do usually rather hide their blemishes, than

publish them to the world : but these penmen of holy scripture eclipse their own name ; they take away all the glory from themselves, and give the glory to God.

6. The mighty power and efficacy the word hath had upon the souls and consciences of men. (1.) It hath changed their hearts. (2.) Some by reading of scripture have been turned into other men, they have been made holy and gracious. By reading other books the heart may be warmed, but by reading this book it is transformed, 2 Cor. iii. 3. ‘Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.’ The word was copied out into their hearts, and they were become Christ’s epistle, so that others might read Christ in them. If you should set a seal upon marble, and it should make an impression upon the marble, and leave a print behind, there were a strange virtue in that seal : so, when the seal of the word leaves a heavenly print of grace upon the heart, there must needs be a power going along with that word no less than divine. (2.) It hath comforted their hearts. When Christians have sitted by the rivers weeping, the word hath dropped as honey, and sweetly revived them. A Christian’s chief comfort is drawn out of these wells of salvation ; Rom. xv. 4. ‘That we thro’ comfort of the scriptures might have hope.’ When a poor soul hath been ready to faint, he hath had nothing to comfort him but a scripture cordial. When he hath been sick, the word hath revived him ; 2 Cor. iv. 17. ‘Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’ When he hath been deserted, the word hath dropped in the golden oil of joy into his heart, Lam. iii. 31. ‘The Lord will not cast off for ever.’ He may change his providence, not his purpose ; he may have the look of an enemy, but the heart of a father. Thus the word hath a power in it to comfort the heart ; Psa. cxix. 50. ‘This is my comfort in mine affliction ; for thy word hath quickened me.’ As the spirits are conveyed through the arteries of the body ; so divine comforts are conveyed through the promises of the word. Now the scriptures having such an exhilarating heart-comforting power in them, it shows clearly, that they are of God, and it is he that hath put this milk of consolation into these breasts.

7. The great miracles wherewith the Lord hath confirmed scripture. Miracles were used by Moses, Elijah, Christ, and continued many years after by the apostles, to confirm the verity of the holy scriptures. As props are set under weak vines, so these miracles were set under the weak faith of men, that if they would not believe the writings of the word, yet they might believe the miracles. We read of God’s dividing the waters, making a causeway in the sea for his people to go over, the iron

swimming, the oil increasing by pouring out, Christ's making wine of water, his curing the blind, and raising the dead: thus God hath set a seal to the truth and divinity of the scripture by miracles.

Object. *The Papiſts indeed cannot deny but that the ſcripture is divine and ſacred; but they affirm, that quoad nos, with reſpect to us, it receives its divine authority from the church, and they bring that ſcripture, 1 Tim. iii. 15. where the church is ſaid to be the ground and pillar of truth.*

Anſ. It is true, the church is the pillar of truth; but it doth not therefore follow, that the ſcripture hath its authority from the church. The king's proclamation is fixed on a pillar, the pillar holds it out, that all may read, but the proclamation doth not receive its authority from the pillar, but from the king; ſo the church holds forth the ſcriptures, but they do not receive their authority from the church, but from God. If the word of God ſhould be divine becauſe the church holds it forth, then it will follow, that our faith is to be built upon the church, and not upon the word; contrary to that, Eph. ii. 20. 'Built upon the foundation (that is the doctrine) of the apoſtles and prophets.'

Qu. *Are all the books in the Bible of the ſame divine authority?*

Anſ. Thoſe which we call canonical.

Qu. *Why are the ſcriptures called canonical?*

Anſ. Becauſe the word is a rule of faith, a canon to direct our lives. The word is the judge of controverſies, the rock of infallibility; that only is to be received for truth, which is conſonant to, and agrees with ſcripture, as the tranſcript with the original. All maxims in divinity are to be brought to the touchſtone of ſcripture, as all meaſures are brought to the ſtandard.

Qu. *Are the ſcriptures a complete rule?*

Anſ. The ſcripture is a full and perfect canon, containing in it all things neceſſary to ſalvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15. 'From a child thou haſt known the holy ſcriptures, which are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation.' It ſhews the *Credenda*, what we are to believe; and *Agenda*, what we are to praſtiſe. It gives us an exact model of religion, and perfectly inſtructs us in the deep things of God. The Papiſts therefore make themſelves guilty, who go to ſeek out ſcripture with their traditions, to which they equallize it. The council of Trent ſaith, 'That the traditions of the church of Rome are to be received *pari pietatus affectu*, with the ſame devotion that ſcripture is to be received with; ſo bring themſelves under that curſe, Rev. xxii. 18. 'If any man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.'

Q. *What is the main ſcope and end of ſcripture?*

Ans. To chalk out a way to salvation. It makes a clear discovery of Christ, John xx. 31. 'These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing ye might have life through his name.' The design of the word is to be an examine, whereby our grace is to be tried; a sea-mark to show us what rocks we are to avoid. The word is to sublimiate and quicken our affections: it is to be our directory and consolatory; it is to waft us over to the land of promise.

Q. *Who shall have the power of interpreting scriptures?*

The Papists do assert, that it is in the power of the church. If you ask who they mean by the church, they say, the Pope who is head of it, and he is infallible; so Bellarmine. But that assertion is false, because many of the Popes have been ignorant and vicious, as Platina affirms, who writes of the lives of Popes: Pope Liberius was an Arian, and Pope John XII. denied the immortality of the soul; therefore Popes are not fit interpreters of scripture: who then?

Ans. The scripture is to be its own interpreter, or rather the Spirit speaking in it; nothing can cut the diamond but the diamond; nothing can interpret scripture, but scripture; the sun best discovers itself by its own beams; the scripture interprets itself in easy places to the understanding. But the question is concerning hard places of scripture, where the weak Christian is ready to wade beyond his depth, who shall interpret here?

Ans. In the church, God hath appointed some to expound and interpret scripture; therefore he hath given gifts to men; the several pastors of churches, like bright constellations, give light to dark scriptures, Mal. ii. 7. 'The priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.'

Q. *But this is to pin our faith upon men?*

Ans. We are to receive nothing for current but what is agreeable to the word; as God hath given to his ministers gifts for the interpreting obscure places, so he hath given to his people so much of the spirit of discerning, that they can tell (at least in things necessary to salvation) what is consonant to scripture, and what is not; 1 Cor. xii. 10. 'To one is given a spirit of prophecy, to another discerning of spirits:' God hath endued his people with such a measure of wisdom and discretion, that they can discern between truth and error, and judge what is sound, and what is spurious, Acts xvii. 11. 'The Bereans searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so:' They weighed the doctrine they heard, whether it was agreeable to scripture, though Paul and Silas were their teachers, 2 Tim. iii. 16.

Use 1. See the wonderful goodness of God, who, besides the light of nature, hath committed to us the sacred scriptures.

The heathens are enveloped with ignorance, Pſal. clxvii. 20. 'As for his judgments they have not known them.' They have the oracles of the Sybils, but not the writings of Moſes and the apoſtles. How many live in the region of death, where this bright ſtar of ſcripture never appeared! We have this bleſſed book of God to reſolve all our caſes, to chalk out a way of life to us. John xiv. 22. 'Lord, how is it thou wilt manifeſt thyſelf unto us, and not unto the world?'

(2.) Seeing God hath given us his written word to be our directory, this takes away all excuſes from men. No man can ſay, I went wrong for want of a light; no, God hath given thee his word as a lamp to thy feet; therefore now, if thou goeſt wrong, thou doſt it wilfully. No man can ſay, If I had known the will of God, I would have obeyed; no, thou art inexcusable, O man, God hath given thee a rule to go by, he hath written his law with his own finger; therefore now, if thou obeyeſt not, thou haſt no apology left. If a maſter leaves his mind in writing with his ſervant, and tells him what work he will have done, yet the ſervant neglects the work, that ſervant is left without excuſe, John xv. 22. 'Now you have no cloke for your fins.'

Uſe 2. Is all ſcripture of divine inſpiration? is it a book made by God himſelf? Then this reproves, 1. The Papiſts, who take away part of ſcripture, and ſo clip the King of heaven's coin; they expunge the ſecond commandment, out of their catechiſms, becauſe it makes againſt images: it is uſual with them, if they meet with any thing in ſcripture which they diſlike, either they put a falſe gloſs upon it, or, if that will not do, pretend it is corrupted; theſe are like Ananias, who kept back part of the money, Acts v. 2. ſo they keep back part of the ſcripture from the people. This is an high affront to God, to deface and obliterate any part of his word: by this they bring themſelves under that premonition, Rev. xxii. 9. 'If any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life.' Is all ſcripture of divine inſpiration? 2. It condemns the Antinomians, that lay aſide the Old Teſtament as uſeleſs, and out of date; they call them Old-Teſtament Chriſtians: God hath ſtamped a divine majeſty upon both Teſtaments; and till they can ſhew me where God hath given a repeal to the Old, it ſtands in force. The two Teſtaments are the two wells of ſalvation; the Antinomians would ſtop up one of theſe wells, they would dry up one of the breaſts of ſcripture. There is much goſpel in the Old Teſtament; the comforts of the goſpel in the New Teſtament have their riſe from the Old. The great promiſe of the Meſſiah is in the Old Teſtament, 'A virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon:—Nay, I ſay more, the moral law, in ſome parts of it, ſpeaks goſpel, 'I am the Lord thy God;' here is the pure wine

of the gospel. The faint's great charter, where God promiseth to 'sprinkle clean water upon them, and put his Spirit within them,' is to be found primarily in the Old Testament, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. So that they who take away the Old Testament, do, as Samson, pull down the pillars, they would take away the pillars of a Christian's comfort. 3. It condemns the Enthusiasts, who, pretending the Spirit, lay aside the whole Bible; they say the scripture is a dead letter and they live above it. What imprudence is this? Till we are above sin, we shall not be above scripture. Let not men talk of a revelation from the Spirit, suspect it to be an imposture; the Spirit of God acts regularly, it works in and by the word; and he that pretends to a new light, which is either above the word, or contrary to it, abuseth both himself and the Spirit: his light is borrowed from him who transforms himself into an angel of light. 4. It condemns the slights of scripture: such are they, who can go whole weeks and months and never read the word. They lay it aside as rusty armour; they prefer a play or romance before scripture, the *magnalia legis* are to them *minutula*. O how many can be looking their faces in a glass all the morning, but their eyes begin to be sore, when they look upon a Bible! heathens die in the want of scripture, and these in the contempt of it. They surely must needs go wrong who slight their guide; such as lay the reins upon the neck of their lusts, and never use the curbing bit of scripture to check them, are carried to hell, and never stop. 5. It condemns the abusers of scripture: (1.) Who do mud and poison this pure crystal fountain with their corrupt glosses; who wrest scripture, 2 Pet. iii. 16. The Greek word is, they set it upon the rack; they give wrong interpretations of it, not comparing scripture with scripture: as the Antinomians pervert that scripture, Numb. xxiii. 21. 'He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob;' hence they infer, God's people may take liberty in sin, because God sees no sin in them. It is true, God sees no sin in his people with an eye of revenge, but he sees it with an observation. He sees not sin in them, so as to damn them; but he sees it, so as to be angry, and severely to punish them. Did not David find it so, when he cried out of his broken bones? In like manner the Arminians wrest scripture, John v. 40. 'Ye will not come to me;' here they bring in free will. This text shows 1. How willing God is that we should have life; 2. That sinners may do no more than they do; they may improve the talents God hath given them: but it doth not prove the power of free-will, for it is contrary to that scripture, John vi. 44. 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' These therefore writing the text so hard, as they make the blood come; they do not compare scripture with scripture. (2.) Who do jest with scripture?

When they are sad, they take the scripture as their lute or minstrel to play with, and so drive away the sad spirit; as that drunkard I have read of, who, having drunk off his cups, called to some of his fellows, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. In the fear of God, take heed of this. Eusebius tells us of one, who took a piece of scripture to make a jest of, who was presently struck with a frenzy and ran mad. And, it is a saying of Luther, *Quos Deus vult perdere, &c.* "Whom God intends to destroy, he gives them leave to play with scripture."

Use 3d. Of exhortation. If the scripture be of divine inspiration, then be exhorted, 1. To study the scripture; it is a copy of God's will: be scripture-men, Bible-christians. "I adore the fulness of scripture," saith Tertullian. In the book of God are scattered many truths as so many pearls, John v. 36. 'Search the scriptures: Search as for a vein of silver: this blessed book will fill your head with knowledge, and your heart with grace. God wrote the two tables with his own fingers; and if God took pains to write, well may we take pains to read. Appollos was mighty in the scriptures, Acts xviii. 24. The word is our *magna charta* for heaven; shall we be ignorant of our charter; Col. iii. 19. 'Let the word of God dwell in you richly.' The memory must be a table-book where the word is written. To make us read the word, consider, 1. There is majesty sparkling in every line of scripture: take but one instance, Isa. lxiii. 1. 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.' Behold here a lofty magnificent style? What angel could speak after this manner? Junius was converted by reading one verse of John: he beheld a majesty in it beyond all human rhetoric. 2. There is a melody in scripture. This is that blessed harp which drives away sadness of spirit: hear the sounding of this harp a little, 1 Tim. i. 15. 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;' he took not only our flesh upon him but our sins. And Mat. xi. 28. 'Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' How sweetly doth this harp of scripture sound, what heavenly music doth it make in the ears of a distressed sinner, especially when the finger of God's Spirit toucheth upon this instrument? 3. There is divinity in scripture. It contains the marrow and quintessence of religion: The scripture is a rock of diamonds, a mystery of piety; the lips of scripture have grace poured into them. The scripture speaks of faith, self-denial, and all the graces, which, as a chain of pearl adorn a Christian. The scripture excites to holiness, it treats of another world, it gives a

prospect of eternity: Oh then search the scripture! make the word familiar to you. Had I the tongue of angels, I could not sufficiently set forth the excellency of scripture: it is a spiritual optic-glass, in which we behold God's glory: it is the tree of life, the oracle of wisdom, the rule of manners, the heavenly feed of which the new creature is formed, James i. 18. "The two Testaments (saith Austin) are the two breasts which every Christian must suck, that he may get spiritual nourishment." The leaves of the tree of life were for healing, Rev. xxii. 2. So these holy leaves of scripture, like those leaves, are for the healing of our souls. The scripture is profitable for all things: if we are deserted, here is spiced wine that cheers the heavy heart; if we are pursued by Satan, here is the sword of the Spirit to resist him: if we are diseased with sin's leprosy, here are the waters of the sanctuary, both to cleanse and cure. Oh then, search the scriptures! there is no danger in tasting this tree of knowledge: there was a penalty laid at first, that we might not taste of the tree of knowledge, Gen. iii. 17. 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die:' but there is no danger of plucking this tree of holy scripture; if we do not eat of this tree of knowledge, we shall surely die: oh, then, read the scriptures!—Time may come, when the scriptures may be kept from us.

Q. How should we so search the scriptures, as to find life?

Ans. 1. Read the Bible with reverence; think every line you read God is speaking to you. The ark wherein the law was put was overlaid with pure gold, and was carried on bars, that the Levites might not touch it, Exod. xxv. 14. And why was this, but to breed in the people reverence to the law? 2. Read with seriousness. It is matter of life and death: by this word you must be tried; conscience and scripture are the jury God will proceed by, in judging of you. 3. Read the word with affection. Get your hearts quickened with the word; go to it to fetch fire, Luke xxiv. 32. 'Did not our hearts burn within us?' Labour that the word may not only be a lamp to direct, but a fire to warm. Read the scripture, not only as an history, but as a love-letter sent to you from God, which may affect your hearts. 4. Pray that the same Spirit that wrote the word, may assist you in the reading of it; that God's Spirit would shew you the wonderful things of his law. Go near, saith God to Philip, 'join thyself to this chariot,' Acts viii. 19. So, when God's Spirit joins himself with this chariot of the word, then it becomes effectual.

2. Be exhorted to prize the word written, Job xxiii. 12. David valued the word more precious than gold. What would the martyrs have given for a leaf of the Bible! The word is the field where Christ the pearl of price is hid. In this sacred

mine we dig, not for a wedge of gold, but a weight of glory. 1. The scripture is a sacred collyrium, or eye-salve to illuminate us. Prov. vi. 23. 'The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.' The scripture is the chart and compass by which we sail to the new Jerusalem. The scripture is a sovereign cordial in all distresses. What are the promises but the water of life to renew fainting spirits? Is it sin troubles? 'There is a scripture cordial, Psal. lxxv. 3. 'Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away;' or as it is in the Hebrew, 'thou shalt cover them.' Is it outward afflictions disquiet thee? 'There is a scriptural-cordial, Ps. xci. 15. 'I will be with him in trouble;' not only to behold, but to uphold. Thus, as in the ark was laid up manna, promises are laid up as manna in the ark of scripture. 3. 'The scripture will make us wise: wisdom is above rubies; Psal. cxix. 104. 'By thy precepts I get understanding.' What made Eve so desire the tree of knowledge? Gen. iii. 6. 'It was a tree to make one wise.' The scriptures teach a man to know himself: they discover Satan's snares and stratagems, 2 Cor. ii. 11. 'They make one wise to salvation,' 2 Tim. iii. 15. O then highly prize the scriptures! I read of Queen Elizabeth, at her coronation, she received the Bible presented to her, with both her hands, and kissing it, laid it to her breast, saying, that that book had ever been her chiefest delight.

3. If the scripture is of divine inspiration, believe the word. The Romans, that they might gain credit to their laws, reported that they were inspired by the gods at Rome. O give credence to the word! it is breathed from God's own mouth. Hence arises all the profaneness of men, they do not believe the scripture, Is. liii. 1. 'Who hath believed our report?' Did you believe the glorious rewards the scripture speaks of, would you not give diligence to make your election sure? Did you believe the infernal torments the scripture speaks of, would not this put you into a cold sweat, and cause a trembling at heart for sin? But people are in part Atheists, they give but little credit to the word, therefore they are so impious, and draw such dark shadows in their lives. Learn to realize scripture, get your hearts wrought to a firm belief of it. Some think, if God should send an angel from heaven, and declare his mind, then they should rather believe him, or if he should send one from the damned, and preach the torments of hell all in flames, then they would believe. But Luke xvi. 31. 'If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the dead.' God is wise, and he thinks this way fittest to make his mind known to us by writing; and such as will not be convinced by the word, shall be judged by the word. The belief of the scripture is of high importance: it is the be-

belief of scripture, that will enable us to resist temptation; 1 John ii. 14. 'The word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' It is the belief of scripture conduceth much to our sanctification; therefore these two are put together, sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, 2 Thess. ii. 13. If the word written be not believed, it is like writing on the water, which takes no impression.

4. Love the word written: Ps. cxix. 97. 'O how love I thy law!' "Lord (saith Augustine) let the holy scriptures be my chaste delight." Chrysostom compares the scripture to a garden; every truth is a fragrant flower, which we should wear, not on our bosom, but our heart. David tasted the word 'sweeter than honey and the honey-comb,' Psal. xix. 10. There is that in scripture may breed delight: it shows us the way to riches, Deut. xxviii. 5. Prov. iii. 10. To long life, Ps. xxxiv. 12. To a kingdom, Heb. xii. 28. Well then, may we count those the sweetest hours which are spent in reading the holy scriptures: well may we say with the prophet, Jer. xv. 16. 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart.'

5. Conform to scripture, let us lead scripture-lives. O that the Bible might be seen printed in our lives! do what the word commands. Obedience is an excellent way of commenting upon the Bible, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. 'I will walk in thy truth.' Let the word be the sun-dial by which you set your life. What are we the better for having the scripture, if we do not direct all our speeches and actions according to it? What is a carpenter the better to have his rule about him, if he sticks it at his back, and never makes use of it for the measuring and squaring his work? So, what are we the better for the rule of the word, if we do not make use of it, and regulate our lives by it? How many swerve and deviate from the rule? The word teacheth to be sober and temperate, but they are drunk; to be chaste and holy, but they are profane; they go quite from the rule. What a dishonour is this to religion, for men to live in contradiction to scripture! The word is called a 'light to our feet.' Ps. cxix. 105. It is not only a light to our eyes to mend our sight, but to our feet to mend our walk. O let us lead Bible conversations.

6. Contend for scripture. Though we should not be of contentious spirits, yet we ought to contend for the word of God; this jewel is too precious to be parted with; Prov. iv. 13. 'Keep her, for she is thy life.' The scripture is beset with enemies; heretics fight against it, we must therefore 'contend for the faith once delivered to the saints,' Jude 3. The scripture is our book of evidences for heaven; shall we part with our evidences! The saints of old were both advocates and martyrs

for truth; they would hold fast scripture, though it were with the loss of their lives.

7. Be thankful to God for the scriptures. What a mercy is it that God hath not only acquainted us what his will is, but that he hath made it known by writing! In the Old times God did reveal his mind by revelations, but the word written is a surer way of knowing God's mind than by revelation, 2 Pet. i. 17. 'This voice which came from heaven we heard, we have also a more sure word of prophecy.' The devil is God's ape, and he can transform himself into an angel of light; he can deceive with false revelations: as I have heard of one who had, as he thought, a revelation from God to sacrifice his child, as Abraham had: whereupon he following this impulse of the devil, did kill his child. Thus Satan oft deceives people with delusion, instead of divine revelations; therefore we are to be thankful to God for revealing his mind to us by writing: we have a more sure word of prophecy. We are not left under a doubtful suspense that we should not know what to believe, but we have an infallible rule to go by. The scripture is our polestar to direct us to heaven, it shews us every step we are to take; when we go wrong, it instructs us; when we go right it comforts us; and it is matter of thankfulness, that the scriptures are made intelligible, by being translated.

8. Adore God's distinguishing grace, if you have felt the power and authority of the word upon your conscience; if you can say as David, Psal. cxix. 50. 'Thy word hath quickened me.' Christian, bless God that he hath not only given thee his word to be a rule of holiness, but his grace to be a principle of holiness: bless God that he hath not only written his word, but sealed it upon thy heart, and made it effectual. Canst thou say it is of divine inspiration, because thou hast felt it to be of lively operation? O free grace! that God should send out his word, and heal thee; that he should heal thee, and not others? that the same scripture, which is to them a dead letter, should be to thee a favour of life.



THAT THERE IS A GOD.

Q. III. *WHAT do the scriptures principally teach?*

Ans. The scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Q. *What is God?*

Ans. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in