

others. Scatter your golden seeds; let the lamp of your profession be filled with the oil of charity. Be merciful in giving and forgiving. 'Be ye merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful.'

OF THE TRUTH OF GOD.

THE next attribute is God's truth; Deut. xxxii. 4. 'A God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he,' Pſal. lvii. 10. 'For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.' A God of truth, Pſal. lxxxvi. 15.—'Plenteous in truth.' God is the truth. He is true, 1. In a physical ſenſe; true in his being: he hath a real ſubſiſtence, and gives a being to others. 2. He is true in a moral ſenſe; he is true *ſine errore*, without errors; *et ſine fallacia*, without deceit. God is *Prima veritas*, the pattern and prototype of truth. There is nothing true but what is in God, or comes from God. I ſhall now ſpeak of God's truth, as it is taken from his veracity in making good his promiſes, 1 Kings viii. 56. 'There hath not failed one word of all his good promiſe:' the promiſe is God's bond, God's truth is the ſeal ſet to his bond. This is the thing to be explicated and diſcuſſed, God's truth in fulfilling his promiſes.

There are two things to be obſerved in the promiſes of God to comfort us: 1. The power of God, whereby he is able to fulfil the promiſe. God hath promiſed to ſubdue our corruption, Mic. vii. 19. 'He will ſubdue our iniquities.' O! faith a believer, my corruption is ſo ſtrong, that ſure I ſhall never get the maſtery of it: Thus Abraham looked at God's power, Rom. iv. 21. 'Being fully perſuaded that what God had promiſed he was able to perform.' He believed, that that God, who could make a world, could make dry breaſts give ſuck. This is faith's ſupport, there is nothing too hard for God. He that could bring water out of a rock, is able to bring to paſs his promiſes.

2. The truth of God in the promiſes: God's truth is the ſeal ſet to the promiſe, Tit. i. 2. 'In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promiſed.' *Eternal life*, there is the ſweetneſs of the promiſe: *God which cannot lie*, there is the certainty of it. *Mercy* makes the promiſe, *truth* fulfils it. God's providences are uncertain, but his promiſes are the 'ſure mercies of David,' Acts xiii. 24. 'God is not a man that he ſhould repent,' 1 Sam. xv. 29. The word of a prince cannot always be taken, but God's promiſe is inviolable. God's truth is one of the richeſt jewels of his crown, and he hath pawned this jewel in a promiſe, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 'Altho' my houſe be

not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.' [Although my *houſe be not ſo*] that is, though I fail much of that exact purity the Lord requires, yet he hath made with me an everlasting *covenant*, that he will pardon, adopt, and glorify me; and this covenant is ordered in all things and *ſure*: 'The elements ſhall melt with fervent heat;' but this covenant abides firm and inviolable, being ſealed with the truth of God: nay, God hath added to his word, his oath, Heb. vi. 17. wherein God pawns his being, life, righteouſneſs to make good the promiſe. If, as oft as we break our vows with God, he ſhould break promiſe with us, it would be very ſad; but his truth is engaged in his promiſe, therefore it is like the law of the Medes and Perſians, which cannot be altered. "We are not (ſaith Chryſoſtom) to believe our ſenſes ſo much, as we are to believe the promiſes, &c." Our ſenſes may fail us, but the promiſe cannot, being built upon the truth of God; God will not deceive the faith of his people, nay, he cannot; 'God, who cannot lie, hath promiſed:' he can as well part with his Deity, as his verity. God is ſaid to be 'abundant in truth,' Excd. xxxiv. 6. What is that? *viz.* If God hath made a promiſe of mercy to his people, he will be ſo far from coming ſhort of his word, that he will be better than his word; God often doth more than he hath ſaid, never leſs. He is abundant in truth.

1. The Lord may ſometimes delay a promiſe, but he will not deny: he may delay a promiſe: God's promiſe may lie a good while as ſeed under ground, but at laſt it will ſpring up into a crop. God promiſed to deliver Iſrael from the iron furnace, but this promiſe was above four hundred years in travail before it brought forth. Simeon had a promiſe that he ſhould not depart hence, 'till he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt.' Luke ii. 26. but it was a long time firſt, but a little before his death, that he did ſee Chriſt. But though God delay the promiſe, he will not deny. Having given his bond, in due time the money will be paid in.

2. God may change his promiſe, but he will not break his promiſe. Sometimes God doth change a temporal promiſe into a ſpiritual, Pſal. lxxxv. 12. 'The Lord ſhall give that which is good:' perhaps this may not be fulfilled in a temporal ſenſe, but a ſpiritual. God may let a Chriſtian be cut ſhort in temporals, but God makes it up in ſpirituals. If he doth not increaſe the baſket and the ſtore, he gives increaſe of faith, and inward peace: here he changeth his promiſe, but he doth not break it, he gives that which is better. If a man promiſeth to pay me in farthings, and he pays me in a better coin, in gold, he doth not break his promiſe; Pſal. lxxxix. 33. 'I will not ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail;' In the Hebrew it is, to lie.

Obj. 1. *But how doth this consist with the truth of God? He saith, He will have all to be saved, 1 Tim. ii. 4. yet some perish.*

Ans. St. Austin understands it, not of every individual person, but some of all sorts shall be saved: as in the ark, God saved all the living creatures; not every bird or fish were saved, for many perished in the flood; but all, that is, some of every kind were saved; so God will have all to be saved, that is, some of all nations.

Obj. *It is said, Christ died for all; 'he is the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world,' John i. 29. how doth this consist with God's truth, when some are vessels of wrath, Rom. ix. 22.*

Ans. 1. We must distinguish of *world*. The world is taken either in a limited sense, for the world of the elect; or in a larger sense, for both elect and reprobates. 'Christ takes away the sins of the world,' that is, the world of the elect.

2. We must distinguish of Christ's dying for the world. Christ died sufficiently for all, not effectually. There is the value of Christ's blood and the virtue: Christ's blood hath value enough to redeem the whole world, but the virtue of it is applied only to such as believe: Christ's blood is meritorious for all, not efficacious. All are not saved, because some put away salvation from them, Acts xiii. 46. and vilify Christ's blood, counting it an unholy thing, Heb. x. 29.

Use 1. Here is a great pillar for our faith, the truth of God. Were not he a God of truth, how could we believe in him? our faith were fancy; but he is Truth itself, and not a word which he hath spoken shall fall to the ground. 'Truth is the object of trust.' The truth of God is an unmoveable rock, we may venture our salvation here, Isa. lix. 15. 'Truth faileth:' truth on earth doth, but not truth in heaven. God can as well cease to be God, as cease to be true. Hath God said, he 'will do good to the soul that seeks him,' Lam. iii. 25. He will 'give rest to the weary?' Mat. xi. 28. Here is a safe anchorhold, he will not alter the thing which is gone forth of his lips. The public faith of heaven is engaged for believers: can we have better security? The whole earth hangs upon the word of God's power, and shall not our faith hang upon the word of God's truth? where can we rest our faith but upon God's faithfulness? There is nothing else we can believe in, but the truth of God: we cannot trust in an arm of flesh, we cannot trust in our own hearts: this is to build upon the quick-sands; but the truth of God is a golden pillar for faith to stay upon: God cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. ii. 14. 'If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.' Not to believe God's veracity, is to affront God, 1 John v. 10. 'He that believeth not, hath

made God a liar.' A person of honour cannot be more affronted or provoked, than when he is not believed. He that denies God's truth, makes the promise no better than a forged deed; and can there be a greater affront offered to God?

Use 2. Of terror to the wicked. God is a God of truth, and he is true in his threatenings? the threatenings are a flying roll against sinners. God hath threatened to 'wound the hairy scalp of every one that goes on still in his trespasses,' Psal. lxxviii. 21. He hath threatened to judge adulterers, Heb. xiii. 3. To be avenged upon the malicious, Psal. x. 14. 'Thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thine own hand:' To 'rain fire and brimstone upon the sinner,' Psal. xi. 6. And God is as true in his threatenings as his promises: God hath oft, to shew his truth, executed his threatenings, and let his thunderbolts of judgment fall upon sinners in this life: he struck Herod in the act of his pride; he hath punished blasphemers: Olympius, an Arian bishop, reproached and blasphemed the blessed Trinity; immediately lightning fell down from heaven upon him, and consumed him. God is as true in his threatenings as in his promises: let us fear the threatening, that we may not feel it.

Use 3. Is God a God of truth? let us be like God in truth.
 1. We must be true in our words. Pythagoras being asked what made men like God? answered, "When they speak truth." It is the note of a man that shall go to heaven, Pl. xv. 2. 'He speaketh the truth from his heart.' Truth in words is opposed, (1.) To lying, Eph. iv. 25, 'Putting away lying, speak every one truth to his neighbour.' Lying is when one speaks that for a truth, which he knows to be false. A liar is most opposite to the God of truth. There is (as Austin saith) two sorts of lies, 1. *An officious lie*, when a man tells a lie for his profit; as, when a tradesman saith his commodity cost him so much, when perhaps it did not cost him half so much: he that will lie in his trade, shall lie in hell. (2.) *A jesting lie*; when a man tells a lie in sport, to make others merry, he goes laughing to hell. When you tell a lie, you make yourselves like the devil, John viii. 44. 'The devil is a liar, and the father of it.' He deceived our first parents by a lie. Some are so wicked, that they will not only speak an untruth but will swear to it; nay, they will wish a curse upon themselves, if that untruth be not true. As I have read of a woman, one Anue Avaries, 1575. who being in a shop, wished that she might sink, if she had not paid for the wares she took; she fell down speechless immediately, and died in the place. A liar is not fit to live in a commonwealth. Lying takes away all society and converse with men; how can you converse with him, whom you cannot believe what he saith? Lying shuts men out of heaven, Rev. xxii. 25. 'Without are

dogs, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.' And it is a great sin to tell a lie, so it is a worse sin to teach a lie, Isa. ix. 15. 'The prophet that teacheth lies.' He who broacheth error, teacheth lies; he spreads the plague; he not only damns himself, but helps to damn others. (2.) Truth in words is opposed to dissembling. The heart and tongue should go together, as the dial goes exactly with the sun. To speak fair to one's face, and not to mean what one speaks, is no better than a lie: Ps. lv. 21. 'his words were smoother than oil, but war was in his heart.' Some have an art at this, they can flatter and hate. Hierom, speaking of the Arians, saith, "they pretended friendship, they kissed my hands, but plotted mischief against me." Ps. xxix. 5. 'A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet.' *Impia sub dulci melle venena lutent*—"Falseness in friendship is a lie." Counterfeiting of friendship is worse than counterfeiting of money. This is contrary to God, who is a God of truth.

2. We must be true in our profession of religion. Let practice go along with profession; Eph. iv. 24. 'Righteousness and true holiness.' Hypocrisy in religion is a lie: the hypocrite is like a face in a glass, there is the shew of a face, but no true face: so he makes shew of holiness, but hath no truth of it; it is but the face in the glass. Ephraim pretended to be that which he was not; and what saith God of him? Hof. xi. 12. 'Ephraim compasseth me about with lies:' By a lie in our words we deny the truth; by a lie in our profession we disgrace it. Not to be what we profess to God, is telling a lie; and the scripture makes it little better than blasphemy, Rev. ii. 9. 'I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not.' O! I beseech you, labour in this to be like God, he is a God of truth: he can as well part with his Deity as his Verity: be, I say, like God, be true in your words, be true in your profession: God's children are children that will not lie, Isa. lxiii. 9. When God sees 'truth in the inward parts,' and 'lips which is no guile,' now he sees his own image in you: this draws God's heart towards you; likeness draws love.



BUT ONE GOD.

Qu. V. THE fifth question is, *Are there more Gods than one?*

Ans. There is but one only, the living and true God.

THAT there is a God, hath been proved; and those that will not believe the verity of his essence, shall feel the severity of his wrath, Deut. vi. 4. 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God