

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

his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Here is, 1. Something implied, That there is a God. 2. Expressed, That he is a Spirit. 3. What kind of Spirit.

1. Implied, That there is a God: The question, *What is God?* takes it for granted that there is a God; the belief of God's essence is the foundation of all religious worship, Heb. xi. 6. 'He that comes to God, must believe that he is.' There must be a first cause, which gives a being and existence to all things besides. ¶ We come to know that there is a God, 1. By the book of nature, the notion of a Deity is engraven on man's heart, it is demonstrable by the light of nature. I think it hard for a man to be a natural Atheist: he may wish there were no God, he may dispute against a Deity, but he cannot in his judgment believe there is no God, unless by accumulated sin his conscience be seared, and he hath such a lethargy upon him, that he hath sinned away his very sense and reason. 2. We come to know that there is a God by his works, and this is so evident a demonstration of a Godhead, that the most atheistical spirits, when they have considered these works of God, have been forced to acknowledge some wise and supreme power the maker of these things; as it is reported of Galen and others. (1.) We will begin with the greater world, (1.) The creation of the glorious fabric of heaven and earth; sure there must be some architect or first cause, the world could not make itself; who could hang the earth on nothing, but the great God? Who could provide such rich furniture for the heavens, the glorious constellations, the firmament bespangled with such glittering lights? All this speaks a Deity: we may see God's glory blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. Who could give the earth its clothing, cover it with grass and corn, adorn it with flowers, enrich it with gold? Only God, Job xxviii. 4. Who but God could make the sweet music in the heavens, cause the angels to join in concert, and sound forth the praises of their Maker? Job xxxviii. 7. 'When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' If a man should go into a far country, and see stately edifices there, he would never imagine that these could build themselves, but that some greater power built them: to imagine that the work of the creation was not framed by God, is as if we should conceive a curious landscape to be drawn by a pencil without the hand of a limner; Acts xvii. 24. 'God that made the world, and all things therein.' To create, is proper to the Deity. 2. The wise government of all things, evinces there is a God: God is the great Superintendent of the world, he holds the golden reins of government in his hand, guiding all things most regularly and harmoniously to their proper end; who that eyes providence, but must be

forced to acknowledge there is a God? Providence is the queen and governess of the world; it is the hand that turns the wheel of the whole creation; providence sets the sun its race, the sea its bounds. If God should not guide the world, things would run into disorder and confusion: when one looks on a clock, and sees the motion of the wheels, the striking of the hammer, the hanging of the plummets, he would say, there were some artificer did make it, and put it into that order: so, when we see the excellent order and harmony in the universe, the sun, that great luminary, dispensing its light and heat to the world, without which, the world were but a grave or a prison; the rivers sending forth their silver streams to refresh the bodies of men, and prevent a drought; and every creature acting within its sphere, and keeping its due bounds; we must needs acknowledge there is a God, who wisely orders and governs all these things. Who could set this great army of the creatures in their several ranks and squadrons, and keep them in their constant march, but He, whose name is **THE LORD OF HOSTS**? And as God doth wisely dispose all things in the whole regiment of the creatures, so, by his power, he doth support them: did God suspend and withdraw his influence never so little, the wheels of the creation would unpin, and the axle-tree break asunder. (3.) The motion of the creatues: all motion, as the philosophers say, is from something that is unmoveable. As for example, the elements are moved by the influence and motion of the heavenly bodies; the sun and moon, and these planets, are moved by the highest orb, called *Primum Mobile*: now, if one should ask, Who moves that highest orb, or the first mover of the planets? sure it can be no other hand but God himself.

(2.) Let us speak of Man, who is a microcosm or lesser world: the excellent contexture and frame of his body, which is wrought curiously as with needle-work, Psal. cxxxix. 15. ‘I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth:’ and the endowment of this body with a noble soul; who but God could make such an union of different substances, flesh and spirit; in him we live, and move, and have our being. The quick acute motion of every part of the body, shews that there is a God: we may see something of him in the sparkling of the eye: and if the cabinet of the body be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel? The soul hath a celestial brightness in it; as Damascene saith, “It is a diamond set in a ring of clay.” What noble faculties is the soul endowed with? Understanding, Will, Affections, which are a glass of the Trinity, as Plato speaks. The matter of the soul is spiritual, it is a divine sparkle lighted from heaven; and being spiritual, is immortal, as Scaliger notes; *anima non fenescit*, the soul doth not wax old, it lives for ever: and who could create a soul ennobled with such rare angelical properties,

but God? We must needs say as the Psalmist, 'It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves,' Pſal. c. 3.

2. We may prove a Deity by our conscience. Conscience is God's deputy or vicegerent. Conscience is a witness of a Deity: if there were no Bible to tell us there is a God, yet conscience might. Conscience, as the apostle saith, 'either accuseth,' or 'excuseth,' Rom. ii. 15. Conscience acts in order to an higher judicatory. 1. Natural conscience, being kept free from gross sin excuseth. When a man doth virtuous actions, lives soberly and righteously, observes the golden maxim, doing to others as he would have them to do to him; then conscience approves, and saith, Well done: conscience, like a bee, gives honey. 2. Natural conscience in the wicked doth accuse: when men go against the light of conscience, then they feel the worm of conscience. *Eheu quis intus scorpio?* Sen. Conscience, being sinned against, spits fire in men's faces, fills them with shame and horror: when the sinner sees an hand-writing on the wall of conscience, his countenance is changed. Many have hanged themselves to quiet their conscience. Tiberius the emperor, a bloody man, felt the lashes of his conscience; he was so haunted with that fury, that he told the Senate, he suffered death daily. And what is it should put a man's conscience into such an agony, but the impression of a Deity, and the thoughts of coming before God's tribunal? Those who are above all human laws, yet are subject to the checks of their own conscience. And it is observable, the nearer the wicked approach to death, the more they are terrified, and conscience gives a louder alarm to them; and whence is this, but from the apprehension of judgment approaching? The soul, being sensible of its immortal nature, trembles at him, who never ceaseth to live, and therefore will never cease to punish.

3. That there is a God, appears by the consent of nations, by the universal vote and suffrage of all. *Nulla gens tam barbara cui non infideat hæc persuasio Deum esse.* Tully: No nation so barbarous, saith Tully, as not to believe there is a God. Though the heathen did mistake in their devotion, they did not worship the true God, yet they worshipped a god. They set up an altar, 'To the unknown God.' Acts xvii. 22. They knew a God should be worshipped, though they knew not the God whom they worshipped. Some did worship Jupiter, some Neptune, some Mars; rather than not to worship something, they would worship any thing.

4. That there is a God, appears by his prediction of future things. He who can foretell things which shall surely come to pass, is the true God: God foretold, that a virgin should conceive; he prefixed the time when the Messiah should be cut off, Dan. ix. 26. He foretold the captivity of the Jews in Baby-

lon, and who should be their deliverer, *Isa. xlv. 1.* This is such a strong argument to prove a Deity, as God himself useth it to prove he is the true God, and that all the gods of the heathens were fictions and nullities, *Isa. xli. 29.* *Testimonium divinitatis est veritas divinationis,* Tertull. To foretel things contingent, and which depend upon no natural causes, is proper to a Deity.

5. That there is a God, appears by God's unlimited power and sovereignty. He who can work, and none hinder him, is the true God: but God can do so, *Isa. xliii. 13.* 'I will work, and who shall let it.' Nothing can hinder action but some superior power; but there is no power above God: all power that is, is by him, therefore all power is under him: he hath a 'mighty arm,' *Psal. lxxxix. 13.* He sees the designs men drive on against him, and plucks off their chariot-wheels; he maketh diviners mad, *Isa. xlv. 25.* He cutteth off the spirit of princes: he bridleth the sea, gives check to the leviathan, binds the devil in chains; he acts according to his pleasure, he doth what he will; I will work, and who shall let it.

6. There are devils, therefore there is a God. Atheists cannot deny but there are devils, and then they must grant there is a God. We read of divers possessed with the devil. The devils are called in scripture, Hairy Ones, because they often appeared in the form of goats or satyrs. Gerson, in his book *de probatione spirituum*, tells us how Satan on a time appeared to an holy man in a most glorious manner, professing himself to be Christ: the old man answered, "I desire not to see my Saviour here in this desert, it shall suffice me to see him in heaven." Now, if there be a devil, then there is a God. Socrates an heathen, when he was accused at his death, confessed, that, as he thought, there was a *malus genius*, an evil spirit, so he thought there was a good.

Use 1. Seeing there is a God, this reproves such atheistical fools as deny it. Epicurus denied there was a providence, saying, that all things fell out by chance, Diagoras. He that saith there is no God, is the wickedest creature that is; he is worse than a thief, who doth but take away our goods from us, but the Atheist would take away our God from us, *John. xx.* 'They have taken away my Lord.' So we may say of Atheists, they would take away our God from us, in whom all our hope and comfort is laid up, *Psal. xiv. 1.* 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' He durst not speak it with his tongue, but said it in his heart; he wished it. Sure none can be speculative Atheists, 'The devils believe and tremble.' *James ii. 16.* I have read of one Arthur, a professed Atheist, who when he came to die, cried out, he was damned: but though there are few found who say, *There is no God*; yet many deny him in

their practices, Tit. i. 16. 'In works they deny him.' Cicero said of Epicurus, *verbis reliquit Deos refujtulit*: The world is full of practical atheism; most people live as if they did not believe their was a God. Durst they lie, defraud, be unclean, if they believed there were a God who would call them to an account? If an Indian, who never heard of a God, should come among us, and have no other means to convince him of a Deity, but the lives of men in our age, surely he would be of Protagora's mind, who did hang in a doubtful suspence, and did question whether there were a God; *utrum Dii sint non ausim affirmare*.

Use 2. Seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously, and give just rewards to men. Things seem to be carried in the world very unequally; the wicked flourish, Pf. lxxiii. They who tempt God are delivered, Mal. iii. 15. the ripe clusters of grapes are squeezed into their cup, and, in the mean while, the godly, who weep for sin, and served God, are afflicted; Pf. ciii. 9. 'I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.' Evil men enjoy all the good, and good men endure all the evil. But seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously with men, Gen. xviii. 25. 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' Offenders must come to punishment. The sinner's death-day and dooms day is a-coming; Psal. xxxvii. 13. 'The Lord seeth that his day is coming.' While there is an hell, the wicked shall be scourged enough; and while there is eternity, they shall lie there long enough; and God will abundantly compensate the faithful service of his people. They shall have their white robes and crowns: Psal. lviii. 11. Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.' Because God is God, therefore he will give forth glorious rewards to his people.

Use 3. Seeing there is a God, woe to all such as engage this God against them; he lives for ever to be avenged upon them, Ezek. xxii. 14. 'Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee?' Such as pollute God's sabbath, oppose his saints, trampling the jewels in the dust; such as live in a contradiction to God's word: these do engage the infinite majesty of heaven against them; and how dismal will their case be! Deut. xxxii. 1. 'If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies: I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,' &c. If it be so terrible to hear the lion roar, what is it when he begins to tear his prey? Psal. lv. 22. 'Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces.' O that men would think of this, who go on in sin! Shall we engage the great God against us? God strikes slow but heavy; Job xl. 9. 'Hast thou an arm like God? Canst thou strike such a

blow? God is the best friend, but the worst enemy. If he can look men into their grave, how far can he throw them? 'Who knows the power of his wrath!' Psa. xc. 11. What fools are they, who, for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath! Paracelsus speaks of a phrenzy some have, which will make them die dancing: sinners go dancing to hell.

Use 4. Seeing there is a God, let us firmly believe this great article of our creed. What religion can there be in men, if they do not believe a Deity? 'He that cometh to God, must believe that he is.' To worship God, and pray to him, and not believe there is a God, is to put a high scorn and contempt upon God. Believe that God is the only true God; such a God as he hath revealed himself in his word, 'A lover of righteousness, and hater of wickedness,' Psa. xlv. 7. The real belief of a Deity gives life to all religious worship: the more we believe the truth and infiniteness of God, the more holy and angelical we are in our lives. Whether we are alone, or in company, God sees us: he is the heart-searcher: the belief of this would make us live always under God's eye, Psa. xvi. 8. 'I have set the Lord always before me.' The belief of a Deity would be a bridle to sin, a spur to duty; it would add wings to prayer, and oil to the lamp of our devotion. The belief of a Deity would cause dependance upon God in all our straits and exigencies; Gen. xvii. 1. 'I am God all sufficient;' a God that can supply all your wants, scatter all your fears, resolve all your doubts, conquer all your temptations; the arm of God's power can never be shrunk; he can create mercy for us, and therefore can help, and not be beholden to the creature. Did we believe there is a God, we should so depend on his providence as not to use any indirect means: we would not run ourselves into sin to rid ourselves out of trouble: 2 Kings i. 3. 'Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that ye go to inquire of Beelzebub the God of Ekron?' When men run to sinful shifts, is it not because they do not believe there is a God, or that he is all-sufficient?

2. Seeing there is a God, let us labour to get an interest in him, Ps. xlviii. 14. 'This God is our God.' Two things will comfort us, Deity and propriety; since the fall we have lost likeness to God and communion with God; let us labour to recover this lost interest, and pronounce this Shibboleth, 'My God,' Ps. xliii. 5. It is little comfort to know there is a God, unless he be ours; God offers himself to be our God, Jer. xxxi. 33. 'I will be their God.' And faith catcheth hold of the offer, it appropriates God, and makes all that is in him over to us to be ours; his wisdom to be ours, to teach us; his holiness ours to sanctify us, his spirit ours, to comfort us; his mercy ours, to

save us. To be able to say, God is mine, is more than to have all the mines of gold and silver.

3. Seeing there is a God, let us serve and worship him as God: it was an indictment brought in against them, Rom. i. 21. 'They glorified him not as a God.' 1. Let us pray to him as to a God. 'Pray with fervency,' Jam. v. 16. An 'effectual fervent prayer prevails much.' This is both the fire and the incense; without fervency it is no prayer. 2. Love him as a God, Deut. vi. 5. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' To love him with all the heart, is to give him a precedence in our love, desire to let him have the cream of our affections; to love him not only appreciatively, but intensively, as much as we can. As the sun-beams united, in a burning-glass, burn the hotter, so all our affections should be united, that our love to God may be more ardent. 3. Obey him as a God. All creatures obey him, the stars fight his battles, the wind and sea obey him, Mark iv. 41. much more should man, whom God hath endued with a principle of reason: he is a God, and hath a sovereignty over us; therefore as we received life from him, so we must receive a law from him, and submit to his will in all things: this is to kiss him with a kiss of loyalty, and it is to glorify him as God.

GOD IS A SPIRIT.

Q. IV. WHAT is GOD?

Ans. God is a spirit.

2. The thing expressed, John iv. 24. 'God is a spirit,' God is *essentia spiritualissima*, Zauchy.

Q. What do you mean when you say, God is a spirit?

Ans. By Spirit I mean, God is an immaterial substance, of a pure, subtil, unmixed essence, not compounded of body and soul, without all extension of parts. The body is a dreggish thing: the more spiritual God's essence is, the more noble and excellent. The spirits are the more refined part of the wine.

Q. Wherein doth God differ from other spirits?

1. The angels are spirits.

Ans. We must distinguish of spirits. 1. The angels are created, God is a spirit uncreated. 2. The angels are spirits, but they are finite, and capable of being annihilated; the same power which made them, is able to reduce them to their first nothing; but God is an infinite spirit. 3. The angels are confined spirits, they cannot be *duobus locis simul*, they are confined to a place: but God is an immense spirit, and cannot be confined, being in all places at once. 4. The angels, though they