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. Ixvii. 10. ‘For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.’ A God of truth, Psal. Ixxxvi. 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 discoursed, 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 sweetnes 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. 21. ‘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. ‘Aitho’ 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 he not in] 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 (faith Chrysostom) to believe our fences so much, as we are to believe the promises, &c.” Our fences 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,’ Exod. 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 consiJt with the truth of God? He faith, He will have all to be faved, 1 Tim. ii. 4. yet some perish.

Anf. St. Auffin understands it, not of every individual per- fon, but some of all sorts shall be faved: as in the ark, God faved all the living creatures; not every bird or fish were faved, for many perihed in the flood; but all, that is, some of every kind were faved; fo God will have all to be faved, that is, some of all nations.

Obj. It is faid, Chrift died for all; ' he is the Lamb of God, that takes away the fins of the world,' John i. 29. how doth this const with God's truth, when some are vehfels of wrath, Rom. ix. 22.

Anf. 1. We must dillinguifh of world. The world is taken either in a limited fenee, for the world of the elect; or in a larger fenfe, for both elect and reprobrates. ' Chrift takes away the fins of the world,' that is, the world of the elect.

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

Ufe 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 fpoken shall fall to the ground. ' Truth is the object of truth.' The truth of God is an unmoveable rock, we may venture our falvation here, Isa. lxix. 15. ' Truth faileth: truth on earth doth, but not truth in heaven. God can as well ceafe to be God, as ceafe to be true. Hath God faid, he ' will do good to the foul that seeks him,' Lam. iii. 25. He will ' give refit to the weary?' Mat. xi. 28. Here is a fafe anchor-hold, 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 refit our faith but upon God's faithfulnefs?

There is nothing else we can believe in, but the truth of God: we cannot truft in an arm of flesh, we cannot trurt in our own hearts: this is to build upon the quick-fands; but the truth of God is a golden pillar for faith to lay upon: God cannot deny himself, 2 Thum. 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?

*U*se 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 tiptoe in his trespasses,' Psa. lviii. 21. He hath threatened to judge adulterers, Heb. xiii. 3. To be avenged upon the malicious, Psa. x. 14. 'Thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thine own hand.' To 'rain fire and brimstone upon the sinner,' Psa. 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 blest Trinity; immediately lightning fell down from heaven upon him, and confounded him. God is as true in his threatenings as in his promises: let us fear the threatening, that we may not feel it.

*U*se 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, Psa. 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 faith) two sorts of lies, 1. An officious lie, when a man tells a lie for his profit; as, when a tradesman faith 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 with a curfe upon themselves, if that untruth be not true. As I have read of a woman, one Anne Avaries, 1575. who being in a shop, witheld that she might sink, if she had not paid for the wares she took; she fell down ipecchets 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 faith? 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 saith the plague; he not only damns
himself, but helps to damn others. (2.) Truth in words is op-
posed 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:
Pf. 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, faith, 'they pretended friend-
ship, they kissed my hands, but plotted mischief against me.'
Pf. xxix. 5. 'A man that flattereth his neighbour, speaketh a
net for his feet.' Impia sub dulci melle venena latent—'False-
hood 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 prac-
tice go along with profession; Eph. iv. 24. 'Righteousness and
ture 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 faith 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 dis grace
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 les his own image in you:
this draws God's heart towards you; likeneis 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