

Lecture XIX.

Of The Creation Of Man

Gen. i. 26, 27.—“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.”—With Eph. iv. 24.—“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”—And Heb. iii. 10.—“Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart, and they have not known my ways.”

While we descend from the meditation of the glory of God shining in the heavens, in sun, moon, and stars, unto the consideration of the Lord's framing of man after this manner, we may fall into admiration with the Psalmist, (Psal. viii.) “Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” It might indeed drown us in wonder, and astonish us, to think what special notice he hath taken of such a creature from the very beginning, and put more respect upon him than upon all the more excellent works of his hands. You find here the creation of man expressed in other terms than were used before. He said, “Let there be light,” and it was, “let there be dry land,” &c. But it is not such a simple word as that, but “let us make man in our image,” as if God had called a consultation about it. What! was there any more difficulty in this than in the rest of his works? Needed he any advisement about his frame and constitution? No certainly, for there was as great work of power, as curious pieces

of art and wisdom, which were instantly done upon his word. He is not a man that he should advise or consult. As there is no difficulty nor impediment in the way of his power,—he doth all that he pleases, *ad nutum*, at his very word or nod, so easy are impossibilities to him,—so there is nothing hard to his wisdom, no knot but it can loose, nothing so curious or exquisite but he can as curiously contrive it, as the most common and gross pieces of the creation, and therefore, “he is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.” But ye have here expressed, as it were, a counsel of the holy and blessed Trinity about man's creation, to signify to us what peculiar respect he puts upon that creature, and what special notice he takes of us, that of his own free purpose and good pleasure he was to single and choose out man from among all other creatures, for the more eminent demonstration of his glorious attributes of grace, mercy, and justice upon him, and likewise to point out the excellency that God did stamp upon man in his creation beyond the rest of the creatures, as the apostle shows the excellency of Christ above angels, “To which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son?” Heb. i. 5. So we may say, of which of the creatures said he at any time, “Come, let us make them in our image after our likeness?” O how should this make us listen to hear, earnest to know what man once was, how magnified of God, and set above the works of his hands? There is a great desire in men to search into their original, and to trace backward the dark footsteps of antiquity, especially if they be put in expectation of attaining any honourable or memorable extraction? How will men love to hear of the worth of their ancestors? But what a stupidity doth possess the most part, in relation to the high fountain and head of all, that they do not aim so high as Adam, to know the very estate of human nature? Hence it is that the most part of people lie still astonished, or rather stupid and senseless, after this great fall of man, because they never look upward to the place and dignity from whence man did fall. It is certain, you will never rightly understand

yourselves or what you are, till ye know first what man was made. You cannot imagine what your present misery is, till you once know what that felicity was in which man was made,—“let us make man in our image.” Some have called man μικροκοσμος “a little world,” a compend of the world, because he hath heaven and earth as it were married together in him—two most remote and distant natures, the dust of the earth, and the immortal spirit, which is called the breath of God, sweetly linked and conjoined together, with a disposition and inclination one to another. The Lord was in this piece of workmanship as it were to give a narrow and short compend of all his works, and so did associate in one piece with marvellous wisdom, being, living, moving, sense and reason, which are scattered abroad in the other creatures, so that a man carries these wonders about with him, which he admires without him. At his bare and simple word, this huge frame of the world started out of nothing, but in this, he acts the part of a cunning artificer,—“Let us make man.” He makes rather than creates, first raises the walls of flesh, builds the house of the body with all its organs, all its rooms, and then he puts in a noble and divine guest to dwell in it. He breathes in it the breath of life. He incloses as it were an angel within it, and marries these together in the most admirable union and communion that can be imagined, so that they make up one man.

But that which the Lord looks most into in this work, and would have us most to consider, is that image of himself that he did imprint on man,—“Let us make man in our own image.” There was no creature but it had some engravings of God upon it, some curious draughts and lineaments of his power, wisdom, and goodness upon it, and therefore the heavens are said to show forth his glory, &c. But whatever they have, it is but the lower part of that image, some dark shadows and resemblances of him, but that which is the last of his works, he makes it according to his own image, *tanquam ab ultima manu*. He therein gives out himself to be read and seen of all men as in a glass. Other

creatures are made as it were according to the similitude of his footstep,—*ad similitudinem vestigii*,—but man *ad similitudinem faciei*,—according to the likeness of his face,—“in our image, after our likeness.” It is true there is only Jesus Christ his Son, who is “the brightness of his glory, and the express substantial image of his person,” who resembles him perfectly and thoroughly in all properties, so that he is *alter idem*, another self both in nature, properties, and operations,—so like him that he is one with him, so that it is rather an *oneness*, than a likeness. But man he created according to his own image, and gave him to have some likeness to himself,—likeness I say, not *sameness* or *oneness*. That is high indeed, to be like God. The notion and expression of it imports some strange thing. How could man be like God, who is infinite, incomprehensible, whose glory is not communicable to another? It is true, indeed, in those incommunicable properties he hath not only no equal, but none to liken him. In these he is to be adored, and admired as infinitely transcending all created perfections and conceptions, But yet in others he has been pleased to hold forth himself to be imitated and followed. And that this might be done, he first stamps them upon man in his first moulding of him. And if ye would know what these are particularly, the apostle expresses them, “in knowledge,” (Col. iii. 10) “in righteousness and true holiness,” Eph. iv. 21. This is the “image of him who created him,” which the Creator stamped on man, that he might seek him, and set him apart for himself to keep communion with him, and to bless him. There is a spirit given to man with a capacity to know and to will, and here is a draught and lineament of God’s face which is not engraven on any sensitive creature. It is one of the most noble and excellent operations of life, in which a man is most above beasts, to reflect upon himself and to know himself and his Creator. There are natural instincts given to other things, natural propensions to those things that are convenient to their own nature, but none of them have so much as a capacity to know what they are, or what they have. They

cannot frame a notion of him who gave them a being but are only proportionate to the discerning of some sensible things, and can reach no further. He hath limited the eye within colours and light, he hath set a bound to the ear that it cannot act without sounds, and so to every sense he hath assigned its own proper stance, in which it moves. But he teaches man knowledge, and he enlarges the sphere of his understanding beyond visible or sensible things to things invisible,—to spirits. And this capacity he has put in the soul,—to know all things, and itself among the rest. The eye discerns light, but sees not itself, but he gives a spirit to man to know himself and his God. And then there is a willing power in the soul, by which it diffuses itself towards any thing that is conceived as good, the understanding directing, and the will commanding according to its direction, and then the whole faculties and senses obeying such commands, which makes up an excellent draught of the image of God. There was a sweet proportion and harmony in Adam, all was in due place and subordination. The motions of immortal man did begin within. The lamp of reason did shine and give light to it, and till that went before, there was no stirring, no choosing, no refusing, and when reason—which was one sparkle of the divine nature, or a ray of God's light reflected into the soul of man,—when once that did appear to the discerning of good and evil this power was in the soul, to apply the whole man accordingly, to choose the good and refuse the evil. It had not been a lively resemblance of God to have a power of knowing and willing simply, unless these had been beautified and adorned with supernatural and divine graces of spiritual light and holiness and righteousness. These make up the lively colour, and complete the image of God upon the soul.

There was a divine light which did shine in upon the understanding, ever till sin interposed and eclipsed it, and from the light of God's countenance did the sweet heat and warmness of holiness and uprightness in the affections proceed, so that there was nothing but purity and cleanness in the soul, no darkness of

ignorance, no muddiness of carnal affections, but the soul pure and transparent, to receive the refreshing and enlightening rays of God's glorious countenance. And this was the very face and beauty of the soul. It is that only that is the beauty and excellency of the creature,—conformity to God. And this was throughout, in understanding and affections, the understanding conformed to his understanding, discerning between good and evil. And conformed it behoved to be, for it was but a ray of that sun, a stream of that fountain of wisdom, and a light derived from that primitive light of God's understanding. And then the will did sympathize as much with his will, approving and choosing what he approved, and refusing that which he hated *Idem velle atque nolle, ea demum firma amicitia est.*¹⁵¹ That was the conjunction, and it was more strict than any tie among men. There were not two wills, they were, as it were, one. The love of God reflecting into the soul, did, as it were, carry the soul back again unto him, and that was the conforming principle which fashioned the whole man without and within, to his likeness and to his obedience. Thus man was formed for communion with God, this likeness behoved to be, or they could not join as friends.

But now this calls us to a sad meditation, to think from whence we have fallen, and so how great our fall is. To fall from such a blessed estate, that must be great misery! Satan hath spoiled us of our rich treasure, that glorious image of holiness, and hath drawn upon our souls the very visage of hell, the lineaments of his hellish countenance. But the most part of men lie stupid, insensible of any thing, as beasts that are felled with their fall, that can neither find pain nor rise. If we could but return and consider what are all those sad and woful consequences of sin in the world,—what a strange distemper it hath put in the creation,—what miseries that one fall hath brought on all mankind,—I am sure by these bruises we might conjecture what

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¹⁵¹ [That is, to have the same desires and aversions, that, in a word is strong friendship—*Sallust in Catil.* c. xx.—*Ed.*]

a strange fall it hath been. Sin did interpose between God and us, and this darkened our souls and killed them. The light of knowledge was put out, and the life of holiness extinguished, and now there remains nothing of all that stately building, but some ruins of common principles of reason and honesty engraven on all men's consciences, which may show unto us what the building hath been. We have fallen from holiness, and so from happiness. Our souls are deformed and defiled. You see what an ill favoured thing it is, to see a child wanting any members. O if sin were visible, how ugly would the shape of the soul be to us, since it lost the very proportion and visage of it, that is, God's image! Let us consider this doctrine, that we may know from whence we have fallen, and into what a gulf of sin and misery we have fallen, that the news of Jesus Christ, a Mediator and Redeemer of fallen man, may be sweet unto us. Thus it pleased the lord to let his image be marred and quite spoiled in us, for he had this design to repair it and renew it better than of old, and for this end he hath created Christ according to his image. He hath stamped that image of holiness upon his flesh to be a pattern,—and not only so, but a pledge also,—of restoring such souls as flee unto him for refuge, unto that primitive glory and excellency. Know then, that he hath made his Son like unto us, that we might again be made like unto him. He said, let one of us be made man, in the counsel of redemption, that so it might again be said, let man be made like unto us, in our image. It is a second creation must do it, and O that you would look upon your hearts to inquire if it be framed in you! Certainly you must again be created into that image if you belong to Christ. To him be praise and glory.