

LECTURE III.*

Rom. 1. 20.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

OUR business (as we have proposed you know) is, with God's gracious assistance, to open to you the principles of religion. Christian religion (which we finally intend) is founded in natural : and the principles of the former must be understood, therefore, to comprehend the latter, as things at least necessarily pre-supposed unto the doctrine of Christ. Now it being our design, in the general, to open to you the principles that do any way belong to that doctrine, we choose (as it is most fit) to begin with HIM who is the beginning of all, the principle that is most firstly first, *primo primum*, as they use to speak. Such is the Deity whether we speak of principles of being or of knowledge : for there is no being that depends not upon the Divine Being, and no knowledge, rightly so called, which some way or other depends not upon divine knowledge. He is not only the first being, but the first and primary known, the *primum esse* and the *primum cognoscibile*, as he is justly to be reckoned.

* Preached December 5. 1690.—The preceding discourse was, doubtless, preached in two Lectures : but the division, and the time when the 2nd was delivered are not noticed in the manuscript. Edit.

Now this text shews us the true method of arriving to the knowledge of him, the unmade Being, by the things that are made; and not only to the certainty of his existence, but of the excellency of his nature; both discoverable by the same light, by the same evidencing mediums, which that you may see, let us view the contents of this text briefly. We have in it

First, What is revealed concerning God, expressed *first* of all more indefinitely, "the invisible things of him." This must not be understood distinctively, as if some things of God were visible and some invisible; that is, of things belonging to the divine nature; but it must be understood adversatively, that is, though they are invisible, and notwithstanding their invisibility, they are yet clearly demonstrable by the things that are made. And then, *secondly*, they are declared to us more expressly, first, in one great instance of his eternal power, the effects whereof we see (as is here said) in the things that are made. But the cause itself is still invisible. And this is most fitly instanced in reference to the creature and the creation, which is said to be demonstrative thereof. All this vast creation, with that great variety of creatures that do compose and make it up, having lain in that, as in the pregnant womb thereof, from all eternity; out of which it is at length produced by it as its mighty creative cause. And then, *secondly*, besides this instance of one peculiar excellency of the Divine Being, (his eternal power) to save a long and a particular enumeration, all the rest of the divine excellencies, are summed up in that one expression, "Godhead:" his eternal power and Godhead, comprehending all his other excellencies and perfections besides. This is the first thing we have to note to you from the text—what is revealed concerning God, even the invisible things of him, particularly his eternal power, the immediate cause of all things, and his Godhead which comprehends all his excellencies together. And,

Secondly: We have to consider here the revelation hereof, these things "are clearly seen," seen, and *clearly* seen. This indeed looks like a riddle; invisible things seen! and clearly seen! things seen that are invisible, or that cannot be seen! But the next words solve it, "being understood by the things that are made." Seen! How are they seen? Not ocularly, but intellectually, they are seen as being understood. They are seen by the eye of the mind, though they cannot be seen by the bodily eye. God, and every thing belonging to the nature of God, being in that respect by the excellency thereof invisible. But it may be said, How are they so seen and clearly seen by the

minds and understandings of men? when the complaint is concerning men generally, even in the very context, "their foolish hearts are darkened," and "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not;" as it is in the beginning of John's gospel. How then are they intellectually seen? Why nothing is more usual than to express a matter of right (where that right is most evident) by matter of fact, and by such forms of speech as signify the fact. "No man liveth to himself;" that is, no man should. It is so plain a case that no man should live to himself, that when the design is to speak the reason of the thing, this is the expression of it, "no man liveth to himself," that is, is allowed to do so; and indeed in common language it is usual to express the passive future by the present or the preterit, as we say, *vir spectatus*, for *vir spectabilis*, or *spectundus*; one that is very much regarded, for one that ought to be or deserves to be so. And a thing that we say is *indubitata fidei*, of undoubted faith and certainty: we mean by it *indubitande*, that ought not to be doubted, or that there is no reason why it should be doubted. So "clearly seen" here, is clearly to be seen and understood, that is, such as might be understood, that ought to be understood, and there is no reason why they are not understood, but because men will not understand; shut their eyes and are willingly blind and ignorant, "not liking" (as it is afterwards expressed in the context) "to retain God in their knowledge." Or, there are here things so clearly to be understood, that they are manifestly left (as the close of this verse is) without all excuse who understand them not. And upon that account, in the words presently following, "that which may be known:" (so we read it) the expression is, that which is known of God; but the meaning is, that which may be known of God, as we translate it. Then,

Thirdly: We are to consider the evidencing medium in the text, "by the things that are made:" the made things that are visible, are clearly demonstrative of their unmade Cause, of the excellency of the power and Godhead of that invisible Being, who is the unmade Maker of them. And

Fourthly: You have the constancy and continuedness of this concealment and revelation, "from the creation of the world." It is not *ex out of*, but *απὸ from*; and notes the term of time and not casualty, which is expressed in the other phrase of speech, we noted to you before, "the things that are made." But all along, ever since the world began, ever since there was a world in being, the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead: they have been concealed and revealed: concealed in one respect; that is, they have been in-

visible to mortal eyes : and revealed in another respect ; that is, have been visible to mortal minds. And then you have

Fifthly : In the last place, (which will be fit to be considered as the use of all,) the inexcusableness of those that receive not this revelation ; so that they are without excuse, that do not acknowledge and adore the invisible Godhead, so demonstrating himself by the things that are made.

As to what we intend, you may take the ground of the whole discourse from this scripture thus,

That the sundry excellencies of the Divine Being, all-comprehending Godhead, are clearly demonstrable by the things that are made. And you may take in (as that which gives the greater lustre to the truth) that which is put adversatively, if you please, notwithstanding their invisibility in themselves.

In speaking to this, these two things are principally to be insisted on :

I. They shew you what the Godhead comprehends, as far as is needful or possible unto us, or what are the excellencies that belong to the nature of God. And then,

II. To shew how these are demonstrable of him by the things that are made.

I shall not dispute the reasonableness of that method in speaking to other subjects, first to inquire about the *an sit*, and then about the *quod sit* or rather the *quid sit* ; to inquire first whether such a thing be, and then to inquire what it is. There may, indeed, as to some confused knowledge of a thing, be an inquiry concerning it's existence, and afterwards a descent made to inquire more particularly into its precise nature. But simply speaking, it would be the most absurd thing in the world to inquire first whether this or that be, before there is any apprehension at all what it is : for then we inquire about a shadow ; and neither he that demonstrates, nor he to whom the demonstration is made, can do other than beat the air ; the one understands not himself, nor can the other understand what he goes about. But it would be much more absurd in this case, to follow such a method as that, because by universal consent, the divine nature includes existence in it, which some therefore rely upon as sufficient demonstration of the existence of God, that is, that his very idea doth include existence, so that it is impossible to conceive of the Divine Being, but we must conceive of it as existing, inasmuch as the very idea and notion of it is inclusive of all perfections, whereof existence cannot be but one, and a very fundamental one too to all the rest. And therefore it must be a manifest

contradiction, so much as but to suppose, that the most perfect Being must not exist, because a possibility of not existing is a very great and manifest imperfection.

But that is not the method of demonstration which I choose, but that which the text lays before us, that is, to demonstrate by that which is made, both the certainty of God's existence, and the excellency of his nature. But the latter we must have some understanding of first, otherwise neither do I nor you know what we are doing, if we have no apprehension among us, who or what a one he is, whose existence we speak of.

I. This therefore comes to be considered and inquired into, what excellencies we must suppose the Godhead or divine nature (which is all one) doth comprehend. And here it must be acknowledged, we enter into a vast and most profound abyss; and you and I have all of us great reason to apprehend our need of much forgiveness, that after so great opportunity as we have had to learn better, we understand and know little yet of what we are to speak and hear of; and we have great need to supplicate and look up, that we may be enabled to speak and hear worthily concerning the blessed and eternal God, and to speak things of him fit to be spoken, and to hear them as it is fit to hear such things.

Why, in general it is certain the name of God doth import a Being absolutely perfect, a Being comprehensive of all perfections.

And now here it may be said, This throws us into a sort of despair; for certainly a Being comprehensive of all perfections, must be to us altogether incomprehensible; we can never comprehend what doth itself comprehend all things.

I answer, Very true indeed: and yet there is a knowledge of this incomprehensible and all-comprehending Being, which is necessary as our first step, not only in what we are now about, but in reference to whatsoever else we have to go about to do, or to enjoy in all time, or in all eternity. But to relieve our thoughts here a little, you must know that we are not to treat of this incomprehensible and all-comprehending Being, in the way of metaphysicians and philosophers, who must have notions of things, ideas of them (it is that which they profess and pretend to) adequate to the things themselves whereof they treat; but our business is to speak of this ever-blessed Being as persons professing religion; not as philosophers, but as religionists; and so we are to consider him as the Object of our religion, the first thing to be considered in all religion; and so the name of our inquiry comes to this: Have we an object for our religion, yea or no? And if we cannot reach to com-

prehend (as it is impossible we should) all that doth belong to the Godhead, if yet we can reach to apprehend, so much as will represent and recommend him to us, as a worthy, deserving Object of our religion, our business is done: that is what we design, and we may know so much concerning him as to know him to be a fit Object, or worthy of religion, without knowing all of him, which is impossible: and if it were possible it would undeify him. He could not be God if we could comprehend him. He could not be a Deity if a finite mind were comprehensive of him.

And that you may a little understand the reasonableness of what I now say, do but consider what knowledge of man it is necessary for you to have in order to your conversing with men. Is it not possible for one man to converse with another, without having a full and entire knowledge of the full and entire guidity (as I may so speak) of human nature? must a man know all the properties and attributes of human nature, or he cannot converse with men? I hope there are many men converse one with another besides philosophers. And so, I say, it is equally possible for you to converse with God, without knowing every thing belonging to his nature. It is enough in order hereunto, and that so you may be in a possibility of conversing with him by religion, as the great Object of your religion: the only Object of your religion, that you know him to be more perfect than any thing else, or all things else, though you do not fully know how excellent or perfect he is, or ever can. But this our conception of him in the general, that he is a Being absolutely perfect, or universally perfect, must comprehend all that can be thought, and all that can be said concerning him. Yet, in the mean time, this is too general to denote to us the Object of our religion. We must have more particular and more distinct thoughts of him whom we are to worship, to whom we are to pay all duty, and from whom we are to expect all felicity, than only this one general notion doth furnish us with. That is, that he is one that is universally or absolutely perfect; we must necessarily descend and come down to particulars; and think what particulars are necessary to constitute and make up for us the object of our worship and religion. And so you may take this more particular (though yet short) account.

When we inquire, What doth the idea or notion of God include? what are we to conceive of the nature of God, as he is the Object of our religion? we must have such a representation of him as this in our minds; that he is an eternal, self-subsisting Being, himself unmade, and the intelligent and free Author

and Original of every thing that is made. Conceive him so, and you have before you the Object of your worship, the Object of religion, one that claims by a natural right that you fall down and adore him. This is some answer to the former of these inquiries,—What we are to conceive by that name of God as represented and held forth to us under that name, or what is it that the Godhead doth comprehend, so far as is answerable to our purpose, that is, of stating before you an object of religion.

II. And now the second thing we have to do, is to demonstrate all this concerning God, by the things that are made : which is that method of demonstration that the text furnishes us with, and directs us unto. If such a Being as this doth exist in reality, have actual existence in such a Being, or he doth exist such and as such, then we can be in no further doubt, whether we have an object of worship, an object of religion yea or no. But now the demonstration of the existence of such a Being, by things that are made, must be done by parts, according as there are parts, that this representation of the object of religion is made up of, and so we shall proceed gradually part by part. As

I We have this to demonstrate to you, that there is existing an **ETERNAL BEING**, that was of itself, depending upon nothing for its being or existence ; and this we have to demonstrate to you by the things that are made ; that is thus ; though that eternal Being is invisible ; you see him not with your eyes ; it is a Being of too high an excellency ever to be seen of mortal eyes, or by the eyes of the flesh, or by external sense ; yet there are things in being that are visible, and of the existence whereof you can be sure. You are sure that yourselves are, and that you are some of the things that are made ; for you very well know, that you began to be, that you have not been always, and that you have been but a little while ; then I say, from that which you may be sure of, that it is a being, you may be likewise sure, there is an eternal Being that was from everlasting of itself. And I would not have you herein to debase your own minds and understandings, as if they could not be at a certainty about such a thing as this, though the matter falls not under the sight of the eye. As to what is to be inferred, to be collected and concluded, it would be too great a debasement of human nature and the mind and spirit of a man, to suppose or imagine that this mind and spirit cannot be as certain of its object, as external sense can be of its object. You think you are very sure of what you see with your eyes, and you have reason to think you are so : and you are so. But I would have you to

apprehend too, that you may be as sure of something that you only know with your mind as you can be of any thing that you see with your eyes: and you wrong your own understandings if you will not think the one sort of things to be as certain as the other sort. You think (for instance) we are all very sure that we see one another, and are here present together at this time: you see me and I see you. No man but will think this a very absolute certainty of what falls under sight. But let me appeal to you now, whether you cannot be certain of something that only falls under the view of your mind, and not under your sight at all. Are you not as sure that two and two make four, as you are that you and I see one another? the one as an object of the mind only, the other as an object of sense. And pray is not the one of these as certain as the other? Am I not as certain that two and two make four, as that we see one another? Have you not as much satisfaction of the truth of the one as of the truth of the other? Well, that being now laid, I doubt not but if you will use your understandings, you will see and confess that you are as certain, that an eternal Being is, which you see not, as you are that any being is, that you do see.

Why! How can we be as certain? you will say.

Why, plainly and shortly thus, from this consequence, If any thing is, something hath always been. Do but consider and weigh in your own minds the clearness of this consequence. If you can be sure that something now is, you may be as sure that something hath ever been, been from eternity, or (which is all one) that there is an eternal Being. Well but how will this consequence be made out? Why, plainly, by taking the reverse of it. Do but suppose with yourselves, nothing more is; then the manifest consequence will be, that to eternity nothing can ever be, and of this (if you will think) you may be as sure, as you can of this, that two and two make four. That is, do but lay down this, and suppose it: there is nothing now in being no where, or any where; whatsoever there was, there is now nothing of one sort or another in being; you then may be sure, that to all eternity nothing can ever happen to be: for nothing can spring, or start up out of nothing into being of itself. Can you be surer of any thing than of this, that if you could suppose the whole universe of being not to be, or that from eternity it was not, to all eternity it would never be, it could never be. Then how plain a consequence is this, if something now is, something hath always been: if there be any being, there is an eternal Being. For if there had been any time, or any moment, in all conceivable eternity whereia there was nothing in being, nothing had ever come into being,

or could possibly have done so. This then is the first step, there is an **ETERNAL BEING**, and nothing can be plainer. But now,

LECT. IV.*

2. We come in the next place to prove to you the *self-existence* of such a Being. There is such a Being first, and now secondly, that eternal Being must be of itself, could no other way be, but of and from itself. Now here you must conjoin these two things in your own thoughts, that so (as you will see in the sequel) every thing that is thus proved, may be found to be proved of one and the same being. Now then it is evident, that this eternal Being is the first of all beings, there can be nothing before it, and therefore it cannot have its existence from another, there being nothing before it, from whence it could have its existence, and therefore it must have its existence from itself: not by once beginning to exist, for we have shewn already, it is impossible, that if there were nothing in being, any thing should of itself rise up out of nothing into being. And therefore this is such a Being, as must be understood by the excellency of its own nature, to have been always in being without beginning, and so it will appear to be an eternal Being, and to be a self-existing Being both at once: or (which is all one) a necessary Being, a Being that doth not depend upon will and pleasure, as all made things do. All made things depend upon will and pleasure; "for thy pleasure they are, and were created." But the unmade Being must needs be self-existent, no way depending upon the pleasure of another, there being nothing before it, and so (which is the same thing) itself necessarily existing, as that excellency, that peculiar excellency of its own nature, to which it was simply repugnant not to exist. And so for the same reason if there have been an eternal self-subsisting Being, there must be still an eternal self-subsisting Being, for it is upon these terms, and for that reason for which it was impossible to it ever not to be. And so that nature which he is pleased to assume to himself is most admirably expressive of this peculiarity of his nature, "I AM THAT I AM," or simply "I AM." Exod. 3. 14. All beings besides, being but (as it were) shadows of being in comparison of this. And

We are further to conceive and to prove concerning this Being, its causation of all things else, this is an attribute of the Divine Being as it is itself without cause, so to be the Cause of every thing. Itself unmade, but the Maker of all things that are made. A thing the blessed God doth justly and often glory

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in, in sundry parts of Scripture : “ The Maker of heaven and earth.” The first as well as the last. He of whom and from whom all things are ; and we are told again and again how, in the beginning of Genesis, and the beginning of the gospel of John and elsewhere, to wit, by a word’s speaking. He spake and they were made. He commanded and they stood forth. That there are made things is a proof to us that he was their Maker. A made thing and a maker are relatives one to another, and there can be no maker of that which was of itself. Whence should that which was made not of itself come, but from that Being that was of itself?

4. We must conceive and may clearly prove from what is made, the vast *power* of the Eternal Being. The things that are made prove that he is a Being of the greatest conceivable power, the greatest that we can conceive, and indeed unspeakably greater than we can conceive. This appears in that, first, he hath made all things out of nothing : as nothing can of itself arise out of nothing, so it is the greatest power that is conceivable to bring any thing out of nothing: if all the contrivance and all the power of this world were put together to bring the least thing out of nothing, you would easily apprehend it impossible to all. If all the force that is in this whole earth, and even in the whole creation, should be exerted together to bring a grain of sand out of nothing, you would easily apprehend it would never be, and therefore how vast is that power of this Eternal Being! he to whom the eternal Godhead belongs, (as the text speaks) to bring things into being that were not ; that were nothing immediately before. But then, secondly, consider also the vastness of the creation. To bring the least thing out of nothing must require the greatest power, but to bring so great a creation as this out of nothing, is that which doth render the power of the Creator, both perspicuous and admirable at once. To have such a frame of things as we behold with our eyes from day to day made to rise up out of nothing, and only by a word speaking, how perspicuous and admirable doth it evidence his infinite power! But

5. We are to apprehend, and may prove the admirable *beneficence* of him that made them. If we cast our eye through the universe, and consider, that the first order of creatures that have life are made capable of pleasure; some kind of satisfaction to themselves, that is, that are capable of the meaner life, the sensitive life ; and that the creatures beneath them are made to afford the matter of that pleasure, when it was very easily possible for a Being of vast, immense power to have made creatures only for self-torment ; upon this account it appears that

the whole earth, the whole creation is full of his goodness. So that rising a little from the meanest sort and order of creatures, you immediately ascend to such a sort and order of creatures as hath, every one, its suitable delectation. That all the repasts of that life that are given to the several orders of creatures, are mingled and sweetened with so much delight, speaks all to be full of his goodness. Whatsoever is necessary for the support of it, is generally taken in with delight and complacency. If this Being who is the Author and Spring of all other beings, were not a being of admirable goodness and beneficence it had been as easy a thing to him, that what should have been necessary for the support of inferior beings should always have been accompanied with torture as well as pleasure. That whereas we and the creatures beneath us find it needful in order to the support of life to eat and drink, he might have ordered it so that there never should have been eating and drinking without torment: now we find it is with continued pleasure, for the greater part, with all sorts of creatures whose case doth require it. And again,

6. We must understand from the things that are made, this Eternal Being to have been their *intelligent* and *designing* Maker. We are to prove this intellectuality from the things that are made; that he is an intellectual Being, that he did not give rise to this creation by an effort of vast and resistless power alone; but by a power that was guided and governed by wisdom, so as to know and design all his work throughout. And (as I have told you) it being our business in speaking to this head, to evince and make out to you an object of religion, to give you a plain and satisfactory answer to this first question, Have we an object of religion yea or no? this is most absolutely necessary to the resolution of it. We have not an object of religion without this, that is, without the supposition of an intellectual designing Maker of all things. If we should suppose only an Almighty Maker of things, who made them without wisdom, without design, intending no such thing; if the effort of such a power as we could not resist, and it could not of itself withhold, had thrown up such a creation as this is, out of nothing into what it is, if that had been possible, here had been no object of worship, no object of religion, that is, there would have been nothing that would either deserve or could receive religious homage from us: nothing that could deserve it, because the thing was altogether (upon this supposition) without design. If a mighty violent storm had thrown in upon the coast some vessel full of rich treasure, and I was passing by it, and (it being without an owner, no one laying claim to it) it

were thrown into my lap, would I fall down and worship the storm? though I might him that guided and directed it. Nor indeed as an undesigning cause of all things could not deserve religious homage, so neither could he receive it. It would be an absurd thing to pay a religious homage where there could be no reception of it, where no notice could be taken of it. But nothing is more evident from the things that are made, than that the Maker of them hath done all with most profound and wise counsel; he hath therein displayed an infinite understanding and thereby made known that his understanding is infinite. By wisdom are the heavens stretched forth and the earth established and founded. Which appears several ways:

(1.) In the order which is every way observable in the creation of God. Wisdom only is the parent of order, and order the product of wisdom. It cannot be, that there should be accurate and continued order by chance. When the letters of the alphabet are put into such an order as to express such and such sense, will any man say this was by chance, and this was without design? especially when this is continued, when they are repeated over and over again, in such order as to make a volume: the very thing (I remember) that the pagan, Cicero takes notice of and urgeth for the proving of a Deity; the creating of the world by a wise and designing cause, against the epicureans who would have it arise only out of the fortuitous jumble of several particles of matter, called atoms. "You might as well (saith he) suppose that the letters of the alphabet in great numbers shaken together in confusion, and thrown out, should fall into the order of Ennius's poems, so as of themselves without design to compose such a history as his, all in verse." When we consider the order that is between things and things, how exact a course and motion, the sun, moon, and planets and other stars do hold, so as that a man of weak understanding can tell you at what hour, in such a month and such a day of the month, the sun will rise and set, and so of the moon; and so (those that do observe them) of the planets and other stars besides; and then to see the constant succession of summer and winter, spring and autumn, day and night amongst us: whence comes all this order? What! from no designing cause? And again,

(2.) Consider the aptitude of things to their end, the several ends they are appointed to serve for, as, who can comprehend that such a thing as our eye was made for any thing else but to see with, and our foot but to walk with, and our hand but to work with, and such a thing as the ear was made for any thing else but to hear with? Who can comprehend that there should be that strange and exact aptitude in every thing for the ends and

purposes that they do serve for, without a design that they should serve those purposes? And this would be a great deal more convictive, if it were so obvious to every one to take notice of, and observe many things that are more latent, and lie out of common view: to think how the several veins and arteries do receive and distribute and return back again the blood from its fountain, the heart, so as continually to renew strength and vigour in the body as the matter doth require: to think of the admirable variety and suitableness of those things that we have in our bodies, called muscles, and all the several sorts of motion that are to be performed; about six (as is observed) belonging to the eye itself, without which it were impossible it should move in the several ways it doth: and about four hundred and thirty of these in one human body. If any man did by chance see a watch, who had never seen one before; but he finds upon observation, what uses and purposes it serves for in the general, and what purposes the several parts it was composed of do serve for, in order to that general end, will he not with the greatest confidence imaginable pronounce, "this was made with a design:" or would a man blame him for his confidence? Or if a man take upon him to pretend to such an excessive measure of wit as to say, "these things serve to such a purpose, for this general end, the measuring of time; and the several parts serve for several ends, this and that motion by which the whole is made useful to that common end: but this was never made by any human art or with a design, but the several parts of which it is composed being agitated variously by the wind, or motion of the air were thrown by mere chance into this figure, and so there resulted out of the whole such a little engine as this, that now you see serves these purposes;" who would not think that man with his pretences to wit, a madman that should give such an account as this, how a watch came to be made, when he sees what it serves for, and what its several parts do serve for, in subserviency and reference to the common end? And which way would you judge and pronounce with confidence that such a thing was made with a design, but by having so manifest characters upon it of a designing cause? so as that every one but a madman would presently say, this was done with a design and for such a purpose. But there is no one that hath given himself but to look a little into the composition of a human body but could see a hundred times more curiosity in so many hundreds of things that go to the composition of it. As I have told you, in each several muscle of a human body there is as much curiosity as can be taken notice of in a watch, and much more in the fabric and structure of the eye and of the ear. So that nothing can be imagined a greater ab-

surdity than to suppose such things as those that we see are made, were made without design or otherwise than with design, and by a wise cause that was first productive of them and continues to be productive of them in the stated way that he hath set for them. And,

(3.) We may conclude an intellectual designing cause of the things that are made, from very many of the things themselves, that not only have characters of a design upon them, and so thence appear to be made with design, but are made capable of design themselves; that is, the whole order of intelligent reasonable creatures. We are all of us convinced that we are not of ourselves, that we are made things, that our minds and spirits which we carry about with us are made things by one unmade. It is but a little while ago that they were not. But besides, they are things themselves capable of design: you know we lay our designs this way and that, we have our contrivance what we will do to-day and to-morrow and (it may be) the third day. And whence should a designing effect proceed but from a designing cause? If there be such a thing as wisdom among the things that are made, there must certainly be a wise maker; otherwise that wisdom being itself a made thing, was made by that which had nothing in it, out of which it could arise. But (as I told you before) it is altogether impossible for something to arise out of nothing itself. Therefore wisdom being somewhat and a made thing, it doth not arise of itself out of nothing, or that is of late beginning. A little while ago they were not, how comes wisdom into such a created kind of being? Why it shews the wisdom of an uncreated Being from whence it came. And,

7. We may further hence collect the *spirituality* of this Being, that this Being is a Spirit, an eternal Spirit, an eternal mind; otherwise it were not capable of design. There are but two sorts of beings in general that we can so much as conceive of. These are mind and matter. Since we have proved to you, this Being is a designing Being, a wise intelligent Being, that proves it to be a mind, and spiritual Being, because matter is capable of no such thing as design: some indeed may apprehend that though gross matter cannot design, (a clod of clay we know can design nothing,) yet perhaps some finer sort of matter, pure and defectless matter may. But I would have it considered what nearer approach to wisdom and reason there is in a flame of fire, than in a clod of clay. Can any man conceive that there is any greater disposition to reason or the exercise of wisdom in a blast of wind or a flame of fire than in a piece of dirt? Therefore we are here to attribute to the Deity that, that God is pleased to attribute to himself; to wit, that

he is a Spirit, which further represents him to us as the Object of worship, and of suitable worship, forasmuch as he is to be worshipped, and worshipped in spirit and in truth. John 4. 24. And indeed, otherwise it had been altogether impossible that this world should be made by a cause that were not purely mental, in its own being a mental and spiritual thing: for most manifest it is; matter as such is altogether inactive; and if you could suppose never so vast a collection of mere matter it would always remain a mere dead lump, as even the light of more intelligent and considering heathens could dictate to them: *Mens agitat molem*; it is the mind that doth actuate, and did at first this mighty *mole* of matter, so as to bring things out of it, appearing in such an order as we do behold, and that we may not go on further in particular enumerations, which we see the apostle, in the text, cuts much shorter, summing up all in the word Godhead,

8. In the last place we may collect from the things that are made that this Being is absolutely *perfect*, or such as wherein all excellencies do concur in their highest perfection whether they be natural, intellectual, or moral, or those that we may conceive under these distinct notions.

(1.) Natural, as life, original self-sprung life in the highest perfection of it, as it imports both a self-active and self-fruitive principle. And again, pure simplicity and uncompoundedness; the necessary exclusion of all composition that may import any thing of diminution or debasement, to that Being we are speaking of. And again, most absolute immutability and unchangeableness, as that mentioned name; "I AM THAT I AM" imports. And again, immensity, unconfinedness to any space whatsoever; so that "heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain" this Being. These are natural perfections that we must understand do belong to him. And then,

(2.) All sorts of intellectual perfection that are truly such; as perfect knowledge of all things, even of minds and spirits themselves; and of future things that no eye can look into, but the divine eye. Most exact wisdom in all things else, as well as what appears in the making of this world, there is also requisite what doth appear in the continual government of it in changing the times and seasons, ordering things so as that they shall hit into their proper juncture, and meet in all their necessary circumstances that were needful to concur for such and such purposes. And then,

(3.) Those that are called moral excellencies, such as truth and righteousness, and holiness and the like: these must be understood, upon the same grounds, all of them to meet and con-

cur in their highest perfection in this Being. And the demonstration whereof is still too, from the things that are made, because there are ideas, images, vestiges of these things to be found up and down in the creation among the things that are made. We find that some things are more fickle than others, and some things more steady. And we find (as I said before) there is such a thing as wisdom, as knowledge, as holiness, as righteousness, to be found among the creatures; and this shews all these things must be in the highest perfection in the unmade Being.

And I might add hereupon (as that which will be most necessarily consequent) that this Being must be *infinite* in all these perfections, because there is nothing in being, and nothing supposable ever to come into being, that doth not result and proceed from it. And that which comprehends all being and all perfection and all excellency, actual and possible, cannot be less than infinite; for there can be nothing more than all: but it is altogether impossible that there should be any thing, either that is in actual being now, or that can hereafter come into being, that comes not from this radical Being. This Being therefore, which must virtually comprehend all that is actual and all that is possible, within the compass of its own power, cannot be less than infinite, because there can be nothing more than all, nothing beyond all.

And for the same reason it will be most evident that this Being can be but *one*. But that I shall not now insist upon: it will fall into the discourse most suitably when we come to shew, though it be essentially but *one*, it is personally *three*, and that is only to be shewn from the Scripture. The *unity* of the Deity is indeed demonstrable from reason, but that there should be a *trinity* in it, is only to be known from his saying so who best knows his own nature. As "the things of a man" are only to be known by "the spirit of a man that is in him," so the things of God, and what is in his holy nature (otherwise not revealed) can only be known by the Spirit of God, as he shall think fit to reveal and make it known to us. But first, it will be needful to lay the foundation thereof in revealed religion, which is the great superstructure that is raised upon natural religion, or the natural notices of God, to wit, to evince to you that the Scriptures are of divine revelation which will be the next work we have to do.

LEC. V.*

Before we come to evince to you the authority of the Scriptures, I reckon nothing can be of greater importance than to enlarge somewhat in the use of that we have been upon: for if we let what God is pleased to make known concerning himself, his own nature and existence, slightly pass without improvement, and lose that, we lose all. All our time is lost, and all our labour is lost if we can let so great a thing slide away without some proportionable improvement and impression: and herein lies the proper improvement of it. The state of things is sad among us, upon this account, that there is so little knowledge of God in the land: for this it hath cause to mourn, and I doubt will be made to do so: but if we had ten thousand times more of the knowledge of God than we have, if it be not a lively and impressed knowledge, it is all to no purpose: the increase of our knowledge would be but the increase of our sorrow, as it is said upon another account. You have heard from this scripture, that the existence and nature of God (though invisible) are clearly demonstrated by the things he hath made. The improvement I desire you to make of it, will be partly by way of information in some particular truths that may be deduced from it: partly by way of expostulation, touching sins repugnant hereunto: and partly by way of exhortation to agreeable duties.

I. For truths that may be collected and *inferred* hence for our information, you may take such as these:

1. That the mind of man is capable of arriving by way of argument unto the knowledge of God; it is capable of attaining in a way of argumentation to the knowledge of God's existence and in great measure of his nature too. For we are told, the eternal power and Godhead are to be clearly seen by the things that are made. Things in themselves invisible, and while they are in themselves invisible, if we are to come to the knowledge of them by the things that are made, how can that be but by way of argument? In themselves they are said to be invisible: those visible things that are beheld are not the eternal power and Godhead themselves, therefore we can come to the knowledge of the former by the latter no way but by intervening arguments, not immediately, for the things that are made are the medium. Therefore it is by way of argumentation formed from this medium, that we come to this knowledge of God's eternal power and Godhead, and this is that which con-

* Preached Dec. 19. 1690.

cerns us very deeply to consider, that if in such a way as this we are to arrive at the knowledge of God, then it is of much importance to us to make a reflection upon ourselves, and understand that from hence, much is to be learned of our own nature. If in this way we are to understand any thing of God's nature, we must by consequence understand so much of our own nature: that is, that it is a reasonable nature, that it is an intelligent nature, that it is a nature capable of improving itself in point of knowledge, by ratiocination and discourse; and even of knowledge concerning the highest and greatest, and first knowable, that is God and the very nature of God. Indeed here the foundation lies of all obligation that can be upon us to be religious, to be obedient, to be subject, to the common Ruler of this world; that is, that God hath given us a nature capable of knowing him, and of arriving to this knowledge of him by this way of ratiocination, as the text implies: that is, to collect that there is an eternal power, and an essential Deity, from things that are made and extant to view. If we are to come by it, so we are to come by it in a reasoning way, and it is impossible for us to receive conviction concerning our own duty towards God, if we have not a right apprehension of our own natures, and what they are susceptible and capable of. God will deal with us at the last day, according to the nature that he hath given us; and therefore we ought to consider ourselves too according to that nature. There will be a judgment-day for men, when there will not for brutes; and if God will difference us in the final judgment, and doth difference us in the way of his present government, from inferior brute creatures, it concerns us to understand the difference too, and to know that we have natures capable of being so dealt with, and as God will finally deal with us; that he doth not deal with us unsuitably to the natures he hath first given us. "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty hath given him understanding." And if so, then he is to be dealt with accordingly; not like a stock or a stone, or a brute creature. It is a great signification to us of the capacity of the nature of man, that it should be said here, to all those that will use their understandings, the eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen by the things he hath made. And that is one thing we have therefore to collect and infer for our own information, that the mind and understanding are capable of arriving by ratiocination and arguments to the knowledge of God. Indeed it would be a strange kind of perverseness to hesitate at the reception of this, because it is plain, that even lower things than our mental capacity are subservient to our reception of divine know-

ledge ; for faith (that hath to do with the same kind of objects) comes by hearing : and if external sense is to be subservient to our reception of the knowledge of divine things, then certainly much more our understanding, which is a thing far nobler than our external sense, and therefore it is a higher and greater talent that we are to be accountable for. We are to be accountable for all our faculties, as so many talents that God hath intrusted us with ; the faculty of seeing, the faculty of hearing, the faculty of remembering and the like. And what do we think, among the rest, the faculty of understanding in so plain and important a case as this, is to be exempted and left out ? that God should have distinguished us by this in so great a measure from the beasts that perish, and we take no notice of the difference and not think ourselves accountable for it ? No, if we are in this way capable of coming to the knowledge of God's eternal power and Godhead, certainly this ability of coming this way to this knowledge, is that which must be strictly accounted for another day ; that we have such a power and use it not, such a capacity and endowment belonging to our natures and never use it, let it lie asleep, never exert and put it forth to so high and to so great a purpose as this is. But,

2. We may further learn hence, that none who have the use of their understandings can ever be innocently ignorant of God. No, saith the text, there is so clear a representation of the eternal power and Godhead in the things that are made, that if men will not yet know God they are left without excuse, without apology, the case admits of no apology. That there should be so clear a representation to an apprehensive creature, and he will not know God ; there is nothing to be said for it. There is nothing to be said why they do not know him, why they do not live in the eternal adoration of him. The matter will be resolved entirely and only into this at the last, they have not known, because they have not liked to retain God in their knowledge, as it follows after, in the 20th. verse ; and into that which we see in that of Ephes. 4. 18. that men are " alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them and the blindness of their hearts." Pray what kind of blindness is the blindness of the heart ? That can be no blindness but voluntary blindness, affected blindness, chosen blindness ; that men are blind because they will be blind, because they will not see. A blindness of the mere speculative understanding is quite another thing, but such a blindness as is referred to the heart, as having its seat and subject there, must mean a blindness that men voluntarily do continue themselves in, as he that stiffly and resolutely winks that he may not see the light.

3. We may further infer hence, that the clearest rational knowledge of God is by no means so acquiesced in, as if that would serve the turn, and be answerable to the saving purposes and necessities of our souls. The rational knowledge of God; it may be had and it must be had, but it must not be rested in; for even this knowledge that doth in the means, the objective representation, lie so fairly compassable, (for the discovery is clear) is supposed to be clear; the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, clearly to be seen, and there may be a reception in some measure, and proportionable to the representation of the object. Besides the objective representation, there may be a subjective reception; it is a supposable thing, and it is frequent (though not universal) that these things here spoken of under the notion of invisibles, are not only clearly to be seen, but seen: and yet, though this knowledge do lie so fairly compassable and may be actually obtained and received, men, for all that, may be left without excuse, for the reason referred to in the verse next but one foregoing, that is, that the truth that is received is held in unrighteousness. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." And by this truth (it is plain by what follows) is principally and chiefly meant the truth concerning the existence and nature of God, "that which may be known of God" (so it immediately follows) "is manifest in them: for God hath shewed it unto them:" for the invisible things, such truths as these, may not only be represented but received; and being so, yet held in unrighteousness, defeated of their proper design; so that such are left without excuse; it not attaining the end that such a representation doth finally aim at. Indeed God would never be angry without a cause, therefore if they be under wrath, if the wrath of God be revealed from heaven, and flame against a wicked, atheistical world, it is plain they are without excuse.

But now, will that knowledge of God serve ourturn that will only leave us inexcusable? will that answer the purposes and necessities of our souls? It is a supposable thing that the clearest merely rational knowledge of God, may but leave men without excuse, therefore somewhat more is necessary, another sort of knowledge. That which is rational, may be had and ought to be had, and we shall most dearly answer for it, if we have it not: but then when we have it, that is not enough, it is necessary, but not sufficient.

But then it may be said, What more is there wanting than to know clearly the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead? Why I shall tell you in one word: To have that clear knowledge made vital. It is not the mere clearness, but

the vitality, of the knowledge of God that must do the needful work in our souls, in order to our present serving of God, and walking and conversing with him in this world, and our final felicity and blessedness with him in the other world. Light there must be, but it must be the light of life, otherwise we shall never be the better for it. A light that is not vital will serve to condemn, but only a light that is vital will serve to save. There is, it is true, a light universally shining in every intelligent mind, in every conscience of man, but it is a light so little profitable to the necessity of an immortal soul, that that light is said to be but darkness, as in that 6 Mat. 23. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" That is, serves for the advantage of souls (if they do acquiesce and take up their rest there) no more than mere darkness would have done. It is but equal to darkness, as to any thing of fruit, emolument and profit to them. And therefore, that light which is truly salutary and finally saving, is the light of life, such is the light which comes by Christ: "He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8. 12.

But you will say, What is the difference? One man knows God, that is, he is well assured and able rationally to prove and demonstrate to another man, the existence of God and many particular things concerning his nature; and perhaps can speak more rationally to such a purpose than many another man that carries the reputation of a pious man, whilst perhaps this man is not so: Pray what is the difference?

Why truly, this is a thing (because I must not insist in such a course as I am in, upon particulars) that may (I should think) be easily understood by any one. One, he knows the kind or nature of this or that food, or this or that drink, he is able to discourse rationally of it, and give an accurate description of the kind and properties of this or that sort of meat, or drink: another, he eats and drinks of it. Let the former, discourse as long as he will and never so understandingly and knowingly, and not eat or drink, he will be famished for all his knowledge: the other, he knows this is good meat, and this is good drink; and he eats and drinks heartily and is refreshed, and lives by it. Is not here a plain difference? Why here is the very difference as to the knowledge of God. One, he can discourse rationally and learnedly about many invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead, but he never closeth with them, his soul never inwardly unites with him as his best good, never subjects to him as his highest Lord, never fears him, never loves him, never trusts in him, nor delights in him as the other doth. Do you not begin to apprehend, here

is a vast difference between knowledge and knowledge; one sort of the knowledge of God and another? How plain is it that with many men, the clearest and truest notions of God are only dead notions; lie dead in their minds, operate nothing there, make them no other sort of men than they would be, if they knew no such thing; or if they thought or believed quite the contrary? Take out all those notions of God which some men have in their minds, and put in the room of them quite contrary notions; a scheme of mere atheism, and the men are found not at all to differ. That man whose head before, was full of theism, is just the same man as when his head was full of atheism. There is knowledge, but no vitality: all his notions of God lie dead, and so are as if they were not. But here is the great difference when the light of life concerning God and the invisible things of God comes into the soul of a man, when these vital beams strike into the very centre of a man's heart, that the man not only hath light about these things, but is light. A wicked man hath light, but it is said of a good man, a regenerate man, he is light. "Ye were darkness but now ye are light in the Lord:" it hath quite altered his temper, begot a new frame and habit in his soul: that is, the knowledge of God hath begot an impression of godliness; and this is that you are to be driving at, and not to take up with any knowledge of God short of this. "He hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, and we are in him that is true." 1 John 5. 20. We know him, and by that knowledge are wrought into a vital union. "We are in him, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

But it may be said, If such a further super-added knowledge of God be so necessary, what is the former rational knowledge worth? what doth it signify? and what doth it serve for?

Why let me bring you back to the former illustration that I gave you before, about the knowledge of meat and drink. You see a plain difference between barely knowing that this is good and useful food, that would be proper and suitable drink; and knowing the same thing by taste and reception in order to nutrition: there is a very plain difference. But what! is the former knowledge therefore useless? that is, to know that this is good meat and drink, is it useless? Is it not a very necessary knowledge that a man should know what is fit to be eaten and drank and what not? If you had not so much knowledge of the former sort as to be able to say, "this is good food which, being duly received, may do me good; and that is poison; if I meddle with it, it will destroy me;" you could not distinguish

bread and a stone : you could make no distinction. In what a case were that man in, that did not know bread and a stone asunder ? So here, without such a rational knowledge of God, you cannot understand why one ought to be worshipped more than another, why more to be trusted, more to be loved than another. If you had not that former knowledge of God you would not be able to distinguish between a proper object of adoration. But what can be plainer than this, that many things may be necessary for such and such a purpose, that yet are not sufficient for that purpose ? We must distinguish between necessity and sufficiency. A rational knowledge of God is necessary, it doth not therefore follow that it is sufficient. If one of you did design, in coming hither, to come to the seat where you use to sit, it is necessary that in order to your coming to the seat, that you come to the door. But is therefore coming to the door sufficient ? No, you cannot come to your seat unless you come to the door, but it doth not therefore follow that you had nothing more to do when you come hither to hear a sermon than only just to come to the door. Pray apprehend this, that many things are necessary that are not enough. It is necessary that you have this rational knowledge of God as the door, as an intermission into that vital unitive knowledge of him which is also necessary and which only is sufficient. And if the former of these be aimed at, with a design for the latter, with a humble dependance and sense of our own nothingness, blessing God that he is pleased, in that natural way, to reveal so much of himself, but also humbly craving, "Lord do not leave me here, let this vital light shine into my dark soul ;" where his further communications are not despised, they will be had ; where they are valued, where they are sought, an inquiring soul will not be left destitute. If indeed you think that your case is well already, and that you need no more of God, and that all is well enough, you may sit still and perish till you sink into perdition. But know that the benignity of his nature, and the methods he hath set on foot for the recovery and saving of lost sinners, will not let him throw away any soul that doth cry after him ; will not hide himself from them that value the vital efficacious transforming knowledge of him as life itself, and beyond this natural life, which is the true sense of every sincere soul.

4. We may collect hence, that the objection against the acknowledgment of a Deity, from his invisibility, must be most absurd, and contemptibly weak and silly. Nothing can be more so ; "for the invisible things of him are clearly seen by the things that are made." Therefore, nothing can be more fool-

ish than for one to say "I will believe there is no God, because I see him not: I see not the brightness of the appearance of his glory that should make me apprehend such a Being perfect, superior to, and more excellent than, all other that I have had the knowledge of:" nothing can be more childish than this, for it is very plain that if God could be seen, he could not be God. The thing carries a repugnancy in itself; so mean a nature as can be visible cannot be the divine nature. As a heathen said, we are not to ascribe unto God, body or colour or quantity, or any such thing that belongs to objects that fall under our sense. "If we know (saith he) that there is a corporeal nature, and if we know that there is an incorporeal nature, in which of these shall we place the Divine Being? Certainly (saith he) in the incorporeal nature, which is higher and more excellent than to be seen with eyes, or to be heard with ears, or felt with hands, or expressed with human voice." It was the saying of Maximus Tyrius, the heathen philosopher. And I pray you, why should we be so averse to the entertainment and reception of invisibles in our minds? For which is nearer a kin to our minds, invisible things, or visible? Are not our minds invisible? He thinks with himself, "I am not to acknowledge a Deity unless I see him," Pray what is it in you that thinks so, that is so sensible: and capable of thinking at all? Did you ever see your own souls? Did you ever see your own minds? Are not we, as to the most noble and excellent part of ourselves, rather to be accounted ourselves among invisibles than among visibles? It was the saying of a poor pagan, when the season of his dying approached, and his friends about him were discoursing of his burial: "Bury me" saith he "Do you talk of burying me? what do you think this body is to me? Do with it when I am gone what you please: if you can catch me, bury me, but you shall never do that, for do you think this body is me?" And pray will you think so basely of yourselves as that this body is you? If it be not, it is a mind, a spirit, a soul in you, that is you: and is not that nearer of kin to invisible things than visible? That there should be an averseness and shyness to entertain in our minds invisible things because they are invisible, when our minds themselves are invisible, nothing can be more unaccountable and unreasonable than this. It shews us to be very low sunk, that the minds and spirits of men are become strangely degenerate things, when any thing because it is invisible is therefore reckoned unsuitable to them, for a reason for which they should be reckoned most of all suitable. And alas! how little things are we capable of comprehending by our sight, in comparison of the things that we cannot see?

Is our sight fit to be the measure of all realities? How small a part of this universe can we measure with our eye! and must all the rest because we see it not, go for just nothing? Surely there are unspeakably greater things which we see not, than there are that we see. Therefore, a thing should not be reckoned less real, or less considerable, or less excellent, because it is invisible to us, that is, to the eye of our flesh: but unspeakably the more excellent and great for that very reason, for its not being seen.

5. We may hence learn the unjust and mad presumption that is in sin. When the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen in the things that are made, that is, they are clearly to be seen by the things that are made, that they have an invisible Maker, and the eternal power and Godhead of this their Maker is clearly to be seen, then how unjust and mad a presumption is it to sin! For is not that an affront to thy Maker? What doth sin signify but ungovernableness to him that hath power to govern me? And who hath a right to govern you, if not he that made you out of nothing? Are not you one of the things that were made? and who therefore shews the eternal power and Godhead of your Maker? How unjust a presumption then is it to sin! But how mad a presumption is it besides! That is, to consider a world of sinful creatures in an apostacy from God and a rebellion against him: from whom have they revolted? against whom have they rebelled? They are things that are made, that have rebelled against him that made them. An amazing thing, to consider the inhabitants of this world, the intelligent inhabitants of it! They are a company of made things, and this world that they inhabit is a made thing. A made thing! what doth that signify? Why a thing depending upon will and pleasure: a thing that may be, or not be; a thing that may continue in being or be thrown into nothing, thrown into destruction the next moment. Why here is a company of creatures, that have taken upon them to revolt from their Maker, to rebel against him that made them. A strange thing! they have not (as the expression is) a footing for their feet; they are made things, and this world a made thing; all which may be swept away with a breath. For men to take upon them to rise up against the authority of him that made them, when they cannot command a breath, not so much as a breath: for that which hath been made, how presently can he unmake it! That which hath been made by him can be unmade by him in a moment: all this world gone in a moment: how easily may that be done by him! Therefore sin, considered in its general nature, is the most unjust and mad presumption that ever could enter into the

mind of a rational creature ; unjust towards God, and mad as to ourselves. Oh ! think whither we are sunk, and what a sort of creatures we are become, and how admirable the divine patience is, that lets such a sort of creatures as we are, live in this world : a world which we did not furnish, which we did not make, and which he can in a breath blow away into nothing, as he raised it up out of nothing, by a breath the other way.

6. See here the admirable greatness of God. Oh ! how we should hence apprehend and adore the divine greatness ! The things that are made clearly demonstrate his invisible power and Godhead : and do but consider these two things—the greatness of the things that are made and—how little they yet represent God. And then see what cause we have from hence to admire his most adorable greatness.

(1.) How great the things are that are made. Alas, what a spot, a point is this earth of ours in comparison of the universe ! If our thoughts should go no further than our own vortex, in which the sun and moon and planets have their course, how much more unmeasurable to our thoughts is that vortex than this earth of ours ! This earth, in comparison of that vortex, is no more than a spot to the universe. It is a far less considerable point to the whole universe than this earth is to our vortex, or that circle that doth immediately encompass it. And then to think of the vastness of this universe ; all which, and all that it contains are but things that are made. How mighty a One then is their Maker, their invisible Maker ! The greatness of the creation gives us a great representation of the greatness of the Creator. But it adds unspeakably more if,

(2.) We consider, that yet all which creation can represent unto us of the Divine Being, is a mere nothing in comparison of what it represents not : for there is a whole infinitude of being besides, that was from eternity, everlasting of itself. And it is but a minute effort of the divine eternal power that is seen in this universe : for all the universe is but a finite thing, as great as it can be supposed to be, it is still but a finite thing : but then, there is an infinity of being besides, that is from all eternity, the being of the invisible God. Take this whole created universe and it is but a shadow in comparison of " I AM." That Being that claims to itself the name of " I AM," and there is nothing besides ME ; nothing fit to be called being besides my own : for all made being is but at will and pleasure, raised up by a breath and capable of being reduced to nothing by a breath. The whole creation, the whole universe but a bubble created by the breath of the Almighty ; and may be let to sink again, if he please, by the retraction or withdrawing of that

breath. If then the things made, clearly demonstrate the invisible things; even the eternal power and Godhead of their Maker, how great a one is HE, first, that could make so great a world as this, and yet, secondly, when that is done, it can represent so little of him! There is yet an infinitude of being appropriate to himself. Besides, how little a portion do we take up of him, as it is said, Job 26. 5—14. when we view his ways, take notice of such and such things in the course of nature, (as he there speaks of) how “hell is naked before him; and destruction hath no covering;” how “he stretcheth the north over the empty place,” how “he collecteth the waters into the clouds, and the clouds are not rent under them: these (saith he) are part of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him?” Oh! how great a thing were it, if we did but once learn to apprehend the difference between beings unmade and made, between made beings and the eternal unmade Being. And again,

7. We may learn hence the impudency of the tempter, the deceiver and the destroyer (as much as in him lies) of the souls of men; that he should ever go about to make any one believe that there is not a God. How strange impudency is it, that he should ever presume he can make an intelligent mind apprehend that there is not a God, when the invisible things of God even his eternal power and Godhead are so clearly seen in the things that are made! Think of this if any of you are vexed at any time (as perhaps many of you may) with malicious injections from that wicked one, that would fain make you believe there is no God; why turn upon him with disdain: “Thou impudent liar, wouldest thou make me believe against my own eyes, against the clear apprehensions of my own mind? What doth not every thing I see, doth not every thing I hear, proclaim the Godhead to me, could there be any thing of being, any thing of motion, any thing of life through this whole creation, if there were not an original Author of all this? Doth not every being speak a first being, and all wisdom speak the first wisdom, and all love the first love, and all goodness speak the first goodness? Can any thing of itself come out of nothing? Nothing is more obvious to a considering mind (as hath been urged before) than that we can be surer of nothing than we are of this—that suppose nothing at all were in being, to eternity nothing could ever be in being. But something is in being now: and if that be the account that is to be given, how there comes to be any thing in being; that is, that there hath been something eternally in being, then that which was eternally in being is the cause of all things that are in being. The

cause that was eternally in being, must bear proportion to the effect. If wisdom and goodness are to be found amongst made things, they are not nothing, you cannot say that wisdom is nothing, and knowledge nothing, justice nothing, for then there would be no difference between a wise man and a fool. If they are something, they could not of themselves come out of nothing; therefore there must have been eternal goodness, wisdom and life; that, that in itself lived, and lives to all eternity: for you see there are such things as these among what is made. Why then it is fit to retort upon the tempter with disdain, "Dost thou go about to make me believe, against the clear light of my own mind, that there is not a God, when it is clearly seen from the things that are made?" If there were nothing else, this proves the eternal Being, that there must be an eternal Cause that hath in it something proportionable to the visible effects that are to be seen, impressed even upon the things that are made. Characters appearing in the effect must have something correspondent to them in their cause, otherwise something must come of itself out of nothing, which is simply the most impossible thing that can be thought. I would only add this in the last place,

3. Whosoever they are that do terminate their thoughts upon this visible world, and look no further, they resist (nay as much as in them is) defeat and destroy the very design of the creation. Why hath God made such a world as this, and set such creatures as we in it? It is, that this world may be an extant, continual standing representation to us, an evidence, a proof of his invisible eternal power and Godhead who made it. We have our concerns and business lying here, within this visible world from day to day; here we are too apt to take up our thoughts, our desires, our designs; they terminate upon this visible world. If we let them do so, if we tolerate ourselves in such a course as this, it is (as much as in us is) to defeat and destroy the design of the creation. God hath designed this visible frame of things to be to us a continual monument and representation of himself, but we look to the things that are made, and there we let our eyes stay and terminate, and never look through them to that which is unmade. This would be a like case, as if one should have a very curious perspective put into his hands, that was very much adorned and beautified with every thing of external ornature that art could confer upon it, and holds it in his hand, turns it this way and that, and views it on every side for a long time together, and then lays it aside, never looks through it: he would see a vast country that now appears to him nothing else but a dark shadow;

just so men deal with this visible creation and frame of things ; they look upon it, take notice of the variety of creatures that are in it, they look on every side of this visible world, as it doth apply itself to them and as they have opportunity to view the things therein : but whereas it was intended as a perspective, that they might look through it into the invisible eternal power and Godhead of him that made all : this never comes into their minds. How preposterous a course is this ! It is little apprehended how guilty we make ourselves in this kind, every day, when we let our minds stay upon any creature of God, this or that man or woman, or house or star, (if we should go so high) and never think of God ; while they are all made things, that tend to represent to us their Maker. Oh ! how little is the end answered and considered, why we have such a frame of things set in view and kept in view continually before us, that we might look through them and adore, look up and adore, that we might through all, view and behold the great Author of all, and bow our heads before him. When we eat and drink, and never think of God, commend the food and drink, and never think of God ; here we take up with the creature, the made thing, and never consider the unmade Maker of it and of us. The end is defeated and lost, for which this world was made and we placed in it, while we look not through things visible and made, unto him that is invisible and unmade.

LECTURE VI.*

II. There are hereupon most apparent and very blamable things, about which it is needful that we should be *expostulated* with, and that we do expostulate with ourselves concerning them : otherwise it would be in vain that another should reprove us, if we be not brought by it to reprove ourselves ; or that another should expostulate with our own souls. And this we should do upon that which hath been opened and improved in respect of such things as these : as

1. Why are we yet so much in doubt concerning what is so clearly demonstrable ? the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead, which are things so clearly seen (though they are in themselves invisible) by visible effects, by things that are made. Why are our minds yet pendulous and in suspense about so very plain and demonstrable things ? For what, can it enter into our minds to think this world rose up out of itself, without a Maker, out of nothing ? Who of us can endure (if

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he consider) the gross absurdity of such a thought? And since we may so easily be at a certainty, why are we not at certainty in so plain a case? why do not our minds come to a settlement? why are they so off and on? why do we hover and halt between two opinions, as we did not know whether God be God yea or no? or whether he were to be stuck to as such? as the prophet deals with that people so much divided in opinion between God and Baal. But indeed ours would be a worse division and more absurd for if we are divided in our own minds in this case it must be between a God and no God. There was no question among them, but there was and must be some God or other, but only the question was, whether that God the people owned, or another were the God; that was all the doubt, but this is a much wider case, when the question is between a God and no God; and nothing can be more evident than the things that are made, must have had some maker and author; it is a comfortable thing to ourselves to feel the ground firm under us as to this first and deepest fundamental; a very comfortable thing for us to feel that it shakes not. But know withal, it is a very dutiful thing towards our Maker to be at a point, and not to be always disputing, or to have perpetual disceptations within ourselves about that which is prerequisite to our duty; for that suspends all duty, and lays a restraint upon every thing of duty towards him; while we waver and hover in our spirits about so plain a thing as this. Let us be all at a certainty, when we may be so easily at a certainty; as certain (as I have urged to you) about this as we can be of any thing whatsoever: for we cannot be more certain of any thing than we can be of this, that we ourselves are made things; for whatsoever is unmade must have been from everlasting, inasmuch as nothing that is made but it hath received a beginning of being. Whatsoever is unmade must have no beginning of being, must have been from everlasting. But can you be surer of any thing than that you have not been from everlasting? You know you have not been from everlasting, therefore you are made things. And again; you cannot be surer of any thing than you are of this, that you are such a sort of made things as can think, as have a power of thought: you are not more sure that you can see, than you are that you can think, and therefore you do know and are sure, that you have minds and spirits about you; for you are sure that flesh and blood and bones cannot think: you cannot be surer of any thing than you are of this, that this bulk of a body of yours, cannot exercise a thought. Well then, if you be a made sort of thing, and you find you have a power of thought belonging to you, and therefore that you have a mind and spirit

belonging to you, you must then have proceeded from an unmade mind and Spirit, an unmade self-subsisting mind and Spirit : and this is God, and can be nothing but God, this is all as plain as any thing is that we see with our eyes, therefore do not pretend to be uncertain in a matter wherein it is so easy to you to be at a certainty, when so much also doth depend upon it. And blame yourselves for this, if you have been pendulous in so plain a case hitherto. Why am I in doubt when I should have been loving, serving, fearing, and adoring this invisible Deity all this while? Why have I suffered doubts to hang on my mind in so plain a case? And,

2. Let us expostulate with ourselves about this, that our apprehensions of the eternal God are so feeble and languid and ineffectual as they have been hitherto, and for the most part (the Lord knows) yet are : that our minds have not only been in a dubious uncertainty, but that the apprehensions we have had, have had so little of vitality and efficacy and power in them, to form our spirits and govern our way and course agreeably thereunto. For (as was told you by way of inference) there needs not only clear knowledge, but vital knowledge of the Deity. And now let me a little further insist upon it, that is, that there is something more requisite, than certainty, somewhat besides a certainty of apprehension and knowledge about it. Such things as there are to be superadded thereto ; that is efficacy, energy, and operative power. I may be certain of those things that do concern me Godward, or that do concern me in reference to my soul, and yet feel little of efficacy and power in the most certain and undoubting thoughts that I can have about such things : that is, though I may have as great a certainty about the objects of my mind as I can have about the objects of sense ; yet the objects of sense do always strike with more efficacy than the objects of the mind do. Experience speaks this plainly, and I need but appeal to every one's experience about it. I might illustrate it to you by a very plain and obvious instance or two, how much more the things that fall under present sense do affect us, than the things do that fall not under sense. Though we are not more certain about the one than we are about the other. As in reference to these bodies of ours, we are not more certain that we do at present feel any thing whether it be grateful or ungrateful to our sense than we are certain that at one time or other we shall die. But is there any one that doth sensibly fear death, and set himself thereupon to prepare for it, as he doth feel pain when that is upon him? Therefore I say, we do need something to be superadded to our certainty to enliven our apprehensions, a power

and energy is needful to be superadded to them. As I told you before, we are as certain we can think, as we are certain we can see; we are not more sure we can see with our eye than we are sure that we can think with our minds: yet the things we do see with our eyes, do affect us more than the things we only apprehend with our minds: therefore do we need to have a great deal of efficacy and power superadded to the apprehensions of our minds concerning the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead. And since it is plain we do need it, that is, that such apprehensions often lie in our minds, and work nothing; but the case is with us as if we had them not, as if our minds were vacant of such apprehensions; surely we should not lie still patient in such a case as this; when these apprehensions of God are the most important that can have place in our minds. Why are we so pleased with ourselves and so much at ease concerning this thing, that our apprehensions of the Godhead should have so little efficacy with them as they have to command our spirits? It is a relievable case as well as there is a necessity there should be relief sought and had in it. If he is pleased to shine into our minds himself, then there will be efficacy go with our certainty; when he is pleased to strike through the consistent darkness that doth inwrap our hearts, and to shine into our hearts by giving us the light of the knowledge of his own glory, then there will be power in our apprehensions of the invisible God, and then in his light we shall see light, as in that Psalm 36. 9. Therefore, for this should we supplicate every day more earnestly than we do for daily bread; "I need thy delivering influence, O Lord, to quicken dead notions of things that lie in my mind, that they may have power and be operative in me, as much as I need daily bread, and momentarily breath." This should be our sense, and with waiting and craving eyes should we be looking up daily and continually: for it is dutiful, that this should be the posture of made spirits towards the unmade Spirit, of produced spirits towards their great Parent, the original universal Spirit that is the Parent of all; that they may be continually maintained and held in life by vital communications from himself, this he would take well: it is childlike, it is filial deportment towards the supreme, original, eternal Spirit, whose offspring their spirits are. A parent is pleased to have a child express and own his dependance upon him. When we cut off these spirits of ours that are made from the unmade eternal Spirit, this is apostacy, disloyalty; this is to set up ourselves and for ourselves, and no wonder if we languish and perish by it. And,

3. We should expostulate with ourselves about our so frequent

unmindfulness of the invisible eternal God, when we have so much occasion to mind him every hour; for the things that are made, reveal him to us continually: we cannot open our eyes, but we must see something or other that should put us in mind of God: we shall behold some of the made things, that should be still putting us in mind of their Maker, theirs and ours. And,

4. Why are we so little conversant with God, so unconvertible towards him, when he is continually surrounding us, compassing us about before and behind, in all the made things which do encompass us? God is in them, or they are all in him, all living, and moving, and having their being in him. This conversableness with God, or a disposition of spirit to converse with him, it imports more than bare minding of him, thinking of him; it carries in it an application of faith towards him. It is a thing that involves complacency in the nature of it, as you can any of you easily apprehend. I converse electively with whom or what I converse with, out of choice, and for a complacential inclination of my own mind. Oh! why is there no more of this with us towards God, the unmade and eternal Being, while he continually besets us in the things that are made, and who is nearer to us than we are to ourselves! He is in us if we would but look in, and meet with him, and apply ourselves to him. It was first the saying of a heathen, (taken up since and improved by many in the Christian church, both ancient and modern writers) "God is more inward to us, than we are to ourselves, and yet we will not converse with him." It was Plato's saying first. But will we not converse with him? How inexcusable a thing is this, his own creature to be a stranger to him; a creature that he made! "I that have made thee, (may he say) and made thee as thou art, given thee a reasonable, intelligent, apprehensive, immortal mind and spirit, and wilt thou not know me? wilt thou not converse with me? wilt thou not acquaint thyself with me? wilt thou not lead thy life with me?" What have we to say to this?

5. Why do we not more frequently do him homage, when we dwell in a world that is all his? Every thing that we can use and enjoy in it, are all made things, and made by him, and this world that contains and inwraps them all, itself a made thing, and we are made things; why are we not more frequently doing him homage? We can take up nothing, we can use nothing, we can enjoy nothing in all this whole world but what he hath made. And what! not do him homage, deep, inward, profound homage, how inexcusable is this! We know we did not make or furnish this world, we were brought into it,

placed in it, and we find ourselves supplied with all things necessary for our support and for our accommodation, suitable to that sort of being that God hath given us. And shall we not do him frequent homage? Suppose a man should rush into one of your houses and set himself by your fire-side, and make use of such and such provisions of your house, as he can lay his hands on, and take no notice of you, would you long bear so barbarous a usage as this? And is not this the very case? You come here into this world that God hath made, and not you; and every thing is his that you can lay your hands upon, or make any use of, and to take up and use this and the other thing, and never look up, or not often look up to him; or not look up with a more delightful sense of your obligation to him, than (God knows) is too common with us; how can we defend ourselves against our own thoughts, against our own reasonings in this case? And further,

6. Why do we drive designs here in this world, apart from him, without reference to him? This, and that, and the other thing I do to please myself, or to advance myself without any thoughts of God, without any referring to him. I lay my designs without him; I will go to such and such a place, I will abide there so long, I will there do so and so, I will "buy and sell and get gain," when we "ought to say, If the Lord will, I will do so and so." He that is the Author and Lord of all this made world, what! do you think to move to and fro in it without reference to him, and drive designs for yourselves apart from him? Sure, the forming of a design should always be accompanied with an act of worship, there should still be a dedicating of our designs to him, as well as of ourselves: for what is plainer, than that he that is the Alpha, must be the Omega too? Hath he not made himself known to us by those conjunct titles, the first and the last? "Of him, and by him, and to him are all things," that he alone might have the glory. There should be a tribute of glory paid him, in every thing we design, and more especially in reference to his design. When we come to take notice of that great design of his, Oh! how it might make our hearts shake within us, to think what sort of acknowledgments God hath in this world, even in that part of the world that is called Christian, in reference to some of the great things, and even the greatest thing that ever was done since there was such a world in being. That is, that extraordinary descent of God into the world, in the person of his own Son, taking upon him human flesh, becoming the Emmanuel, the divine nature, the invisible Godhead, in the second person,

uniting itself with the manhood. Here are acknowledgments of this made amongst us ; but it might make our hearts shake within us, to think of what kind. That is, according to the usage of too many, the descent of our blessed Lord, the eternal Word in human flesh, they seem to think (that their practice expresseth) that the nativity of our Lord is not to be celebrated fitly, but by a debauch ; they cannot fitly celebrate the nativity of Christ, but by being drunk. Monstrous wickedness ! To think that the great God is to be worshipped so unsuitably to himself ; when he is to be made the end of all things. The Former of all things ; how is he made the end, otherwise than as he is glorified ? But to glorify him, to pretend to glorify him by breaking his laws, by violating his known and most sacred precepts ! By breaking the law, dishonourest thou God ? Rom. 2. 23. That was bad enough : but it is much worse, by breaking the law, to dishonour God under the pretence of doing him honour, to think that I honour him by so palpably dishonouring him. And,

7. Why are we so prone to blame and censure the methods of his government over this world, which he hath made, and when by it, and the things in it that he hath made, he is proclaiming to us his eternal power and Godhead ? Is he not able wisely and well to govern his own creation ? Could he bring such a world as this out of nothing into being, and doth he not know what to do with it, now he hath made it, and how to order the concerns of it ? Oh ! how little is God revered as the Creator and Former of all things, when we take upon us to censure, and blame, and tax his doings ? Why do we strive with him, when he gives not account of any of his matters ? Job 33. 13. He is far above it. And like it, is that 40. 2, “ Shall he that contends with the Almighty, instruct him ? He that reproves God let him answer it.” What ! for man to take upon him to reprove God, to say he might have ordered things better, so and so, things might have been brought about in a fitter season, might have been done sooner, they might have been compassed by fitter methods, by more suitable instruments, and the like. Sure we forget ourselves when we consider not, that “ the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead,” are all testified by the things that are made. And what ! cannot “ the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead,” guide and manage things more wisely than we ? “ Woe to him that strives with his Maker ! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth.” Isaiah 45. 9. Let them choose their match. And those many ex-

pressions we have from himself in the latter end of the book of Job; "Canst thou do so and so?" doth intimate this all along to them and to us, that unless we could do such and such things, unless we could lay the foundation of such a world as this; unless we could stretch out such another heaven, and form and establish such another earth, unless we could span the heavens with our hands, and measure the dust of the earth, and gather the winds in our fists, and set bounds and limits to the sea as we please, "You are not my match (saith God) unless you can do such and such things. And if you are not my match, why will you strive with me? why will you contend with me? why should your wisdom vie with mine, and your will with mine, and your interest with mine?" And again,

8. Why do we so little covet him for our portion, who is plainly proved by the things that are made to comprehend, in himself virtually, all the perfections of this world, and formally, infinitely more? For there must be infinitely more in himself than is laid out on creation. Do you think he did exhaust himself in making such a world as this? The world when all is done is but a finite thing, all that is made is but finite, but that which is unmade is still infinite. He that comprehends in himself all excellency, all goodness, all perfection, created and uncreated, must certainly be a sufficient portion for us. The absolutely perfect Being, or (which is all one in Scripture) God all-sufficient, must be a competent satisfying portion (one would think) for any one. Why then do we not covet him more for our portion? why is this not more the sense of our souls, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and who is there on earth that can come in comparison with thee?" "When heaven and earth are all made things and made by thee, there must be in thee infinitely more than in both." But when we take up with so mean and little things in our thoughts, (inasmuch as we know it belongs to the Deity to be the portion and blessedness of a soul) let us hereupon think with ourselves, what an affront we put upon the infinite eternal Godhead, to think it possible for any creature to fill up his room. It is a most insolent affront to the infinite eternal God, to think that any creature can be to you instead of God: an affront that you can never expiate with your blood. This is to undeify him. Him, whom in all your thoughts you should deify, you nullify, for make him any thing less than God and you make him nothing. And,

9. Why do we no more fear him as an enemy, when he hath demonstrated his eternal power and Godhead by the things that are made? and all the invisible things that belong to his

nature besides, are all demonstrated by the things that are made? Why do we not more fear to have such a one for our enemy? "Fear ye not me (saith the Lord) who hath bounded the sea that it cannot pass: and though the waves thereof toss themselves they cannot go over," (giving that one instance when he could have given thousands as great in that 5 Jeremiah) "what stupid creatures are you that you will not fear me, when ye have such an instance as this and thousands more always in view before you, of my invisible eternal Godhead, that hath in time displayed and shewed itself forth? And,

10. Lastly: Why are we so prone to fear men, the creatures of God, while we so little fear and stand in awe of him? It is still a wrong to our Maker, a wrong done to God, considered under the notion of Creator. Look to that Isaiah 51, 12 "Who art thou, that art afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man that shall be as grass? and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, who stretched forth the heavens?" inasmuch as he is the Maker and Lord of all. This shews that it is an insolency against him and the rights of his Godhead, to place your supreme fear on any thing besides him. Therefore the form of speech there is very remarkable, "Who art thou, that art afraid of a man?" The form of speech is reprehensive and expostulatory, "Who art thou?" When people find themselves seized with any immoderate fears, they are wont to pity themselves, and to look upon it as an infelicity: but they forget it is a crime; and those words represent it as a crime, "who art thou that art afraid—who art thou?" what doth that signify? Why it signifies thus much, Thou takest too much upon thee, while thou thinkest thou art only to be pitied, thou dost little consider how faulty thou art, thou dost transpose the government, thou deposest the Lord thy Maker, and settest up a mortal thing upon his throne. Who art thou that takest upon thee at this rate, to undeify God and deify the creature, a mortal worm? Who art thou that turnest all things upside down, to depress the Maker and to exalt a little piece of animated clay into his place? This is very deeply to be considered, that to have our spirits more liable to be awed by a man, a mortal thing, than by the eternal immortal God, is a doing violence and a wrong to, and encroaching upon, the rights of the eternal Godhead. Well now, about such things as these we should expostulate with ourselves.

III. I shall shut up all with some particulars of most apparent duty, to which we need to be exhorted in reference to what hath been hitherto said. As,

1. Since "the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead," are so clearly demonstrable by the things that are made, let us learn more to contemplate these invisible things of God, in the visible things that we have before our eyes: and know that it is an argument of very great spirituality so to do. Let the examples we have in Scripture engage our minds more this way. To look over such psalms as psalm the 8th. the 104th. and the 148th. all full of admiration of the works of God: and a great many more, with multitudes of passages of Scripture besides in other places; shewing how much the spirits of the saints of old have been exercised and taken up in admiring God upon those conspicuous appearances, that have been of his glory in the creation. I doubt there is altogether a fault among us that we so little apply our minds this way. But know it is our duty to be exercised in it, to take times on purpose to contemplate God in the creature, to behold and view the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead, in the things that are made. And,

2. Hereupon joyfully acknowledge this God for your God; considering the case of the blinded besotted pagans, who worship stocks and stones for deities, or the sun, moon, and stars; who pray to a god that cannot save: the generality of the more besotted of them; though it be true indeed, among pagans there have been those that have been much wiser and of more refined minds. But since it hath pleased God more expressly to manifest himself to you, joyfully acknowledge it, as his people of old have been wont to do. "Their gods are idols, the works of men's hands; but our God made the heavens." And as it is in that Jer. 10. 11. "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." When there are such multitudes of fictitious deities under a doom to perish, all the idols of this world, and this world itself, that great idol, that is most set up and exalted against God; Oh! do you joyfully acknowledge this God for your God, that you are sure is the only living and true God. Our God that made the heavens; own your relation to him, walk in his name, as "all people will do, every one in the name of his God."

3. Resign and devote yourselves absolutely to him, for you are made things, and he is your Maker. And can one have a greater right in any thing than that which he hath made, and made out of nothing? not given it an external accidental form only, but given it its whole being. And so is the matter between him and you. Wherefore it is to God you must give

yourselves : give him your whole being, body and soul and all that you have : for it is all but made, and it is the right and property of him that made you.

4. Trust in him with all your hearts, commit yourselves entirely and cheerfully to him. Who would scruple to do so to so kind and benign a Maker? for was it not in his choice and power once, whether he would have made you or not? was it not determinate by him? by his pleasure, whether you should be or not be? If you have devoted yourselves to him, so as to be his by choice and consent, as well as by natural right, know then that you have all the encouragement in the world to intrust and commit yourselves to him as to a faithful Creator; as the expression is 1 Pet. 4. 19. This is a thing not enough understood, the obligation that lies upon us to own God more frequently and solemnly, under the notion of our Creator. We think the notion wherein we should own him, more to be that of a Father, and as in Christ he hath been a Redeemer to us: but these things are not to exclude one another by any means. It is very true indeed, that all the interest we had in him as Creator, was lost and forfeited by the apostacy: but that matter being, by the Redeemer, made up between him and all those that, in the Redeemer, accept him and take him for their God, we are not now to think his Creatorship is to be absorbed and swallowed up in any other supervening notion, by any means. We are now, by redeeming grace and mercy, brought to that state and pass, that we may own him comfortably as a Creator again. So that whereas, we had lost all right and interest in him, as such, by our apostacy: a restitution being made, now we are to commit ourselves to him, as a faithful Creator. Faithfulness hath reference to a promise, and a covenant. We are to commit ourselves now to him as a Creator, under obligation. There was a covenant made at first, between himself and his innocent creature; that covenant was broken by the apostacy; so that he could be challenged upon faithfulness no longer. But now, that matter being composed and made up by the Redeemer, by a Mediator, there is a new covenant made, and now faithfulness hath place in reference to him as a Creator, and we are to own him as such, and trust in him, and commit ourselves to him as such. And,

5. You should hereupon, cease from solicitude about the issue of things in reference to yourselves, or in reference to the whole community that you profess to be of, even that people that he hath in this world. Solicitude should cease about private and more public concerns; you should reckon that yourselves and all things, are in the best hands in which they could

lie, or into which they could be put. In reference to things devoted yourselves, intrusted yourselves to him upon invitation; not presumptuously, but as being warranted and encouraged by himself. Then it is a wrong to him to be anxious what he will that relate to yourselves, you have committed yourselves to him, do with you. What! will he not shew mercy to the soul he hath made? Indeed, his having made it, if there be no expiation of sin, would have availed nothing; for there is a case when "he that made them would not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour:" Isaiah 27. 11. That is, when they are in rebellion against him and will not be reconciled to him; but when a reconciliation is brought about, and you have surrendered to him the soul that he hath made, it is a great iniquity and wrong to him to suppose, that he will not now deal with you as a faithful Creator. Therefore, though now you know your soul is lodged in flesh, and within a little while this mortal frame must drop in pieces and fall into the dust, yet never be solicitous what he will do with your soul, or what will become of it after all: you do betrust, you have committed it to him, who is the most absolutely perfect God, and the most absolutely perfect Being. All things that he hath made demonstrate him to be so: and who would be afraid to let his soul rest in the midst of infinite, immense goodness? "His soul shall dwell at ease:" (as it is said of one that fears God) but very faintly, and beneath the significance of that expression it is rendered, Psalm 25. 13. "His soul shall dwell in goodness (that is the expression) who feareth God," shall take up its rest, sweet and pleasant rest as men are wont to do at night. Who would be solicitous when he is to commit and put his soul into the midst of immense and boundless goodness, as his must be who is the Author of all made things? for they all spring from goodness, goodness that would diffuse itself and flow arbitrarily and freely in such a creation as this. And,

6. Live more adoring lives. Let us labour to habituate ourselves, our spirits more to adoration, seeing the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead are continually seen in things that are made. Let that sentence be engraven as a motto upon each of our hearts and inwrought into our souls: "Come let us worship and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker." Let every thing that serves to put us in mind of him, prompt us immediately to worship, and bow down the head before him, upon such apprehensions of God, such demonstrations of his love, of his power, and goodness and

greatness as offer themselves to our view. Let us presently bow and worship, take notice and adore.

7. Let us subject ourselves most absolutely to his government, both legal and providential. Doth it not belong to him to give laws to his creatures that are capable of government by law, that have been entirely and wholly made by him? Should not he give laws, even to our minds and to our spirits, and lay them under the obligation of his laws? This is sure the most reasonable thing in the world. Why should he not prescribe to my mind, who is himself an unmade mind, while mine is but a made mind? Why should not he prescribe to me how my spirit should work this way or that, while he is an eternal Spirit and Mind. My spirit that sprung from him, why should not he direct it, even by a law, how to think, how to dispose of my thoughts this way and that, when he hath given me a power to think? Why should I not use my apprehensive power and knowledge for him from whom I received it? He that knows my mould and frame, and hath given me that intelligent spirit that I have, shall I not keep it in perpetual subjection to him, receive laws from his mouth, never think myself at liberty, and in an indifferency to use my thoughts as I will, and let out my affections as I will; but all under his law? And then, as to his providential government, shall not he do what he will with his creatures, with the thing that he hath made? How reasonable is it, how just towards him and how good for itself to be subject to him? Then I am quiet if I can live under his government, to be disposed of by him as he pleaseth: otherwise there is a continual war between him and me: and so a continual war between me and myself; affection against conscience, passion against judgment: for there will always be something in me as long as I live, as long as I have a reasonable intelligent being, that will take the part of God against unreasonable rebellious passions, and I shall be a self-judged creature before him in his sight. And,

8. Lastly: Let us always propound him to ourselves as the Object of our religion: and take pleasure in the thought of this, that we have found out an object of religion, which we have revealed to us, that he hath himself, revealed to us himself as the great and only Object of religion: the one indisputable One, so as no controversy remains now concerning it. And whereas, it is the business of all religion, to pay all duty to God and expect and seek all relief and felicity from him, let us demean ourselves towards him accordingly. And consider with ourselves, that in making his mind known to us, giving

us to know himself, he hath given us to know ourselves also, so as to understand that being creatures, made things, we are made for another. That which cannot be by itself, must not be for itself: what more reasonable thing in all the world? Therefore, our business must be with him as the final, ultimate, animative Object of our religion; and that designing duty to him and felicity to ourselves, we have to do with him as the Object of religion under that twofold notion, as one that we are to glorify, and as one whom we are to enjoy for ever. And this now shews us much of ourselves. That is, shewing us what our nature and state are, it shews us what our end of business must be, and that is a very great thing. And this is, we must understand, what we were made for. And this being the first head of Christian religion, (indeed of all religion) it resolves the first question that every one is concerned to make to himself: What was I made for? What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy him: to pay all duty to him and to expect all felicity and blessedness from him; and to seek it. It is thus only that you can come to know what you are here in this world for: and it were a lamentable case, to know the several powers and faculties that belong to our natures, and not to know what all these are for. To know I am such a creature, of such a mould and frame, and not to know what these are made for! This would be a very sad consideration to a serious and considering mind, if it were not to be collected and found out what they were made for. As if one that never saw a watch in his life before he finds it by casualty and chance, and sees a great deal of curiosity in the workmanship, yet cannot imagine what it is intended for, what it was made for; it stands still and he knows not how to set it going, or if he did, he doth not understand the use of it. Here is the case with an intelligent creature, a man if he should contemplate himself, and not contemplate his Maker, his end. Here I have a strange kind of being, I have a body and I have a soul inhabiting that body; but I do not know why such a creature as I came to have a place in the world, why I have such a being, what I am to do, and what I was made for. But now by this you come to know what it is you were made for. If you know you have a Maker, you must know you were made for him, to glorify him and to enjoy him for ever: and it is a great thing to have made this step; when we have taken notice of our own faculties and powers, and what our structure and frame are. Now to know whose we are, what satisfaction is it to the mind

of man! to know this, that I am made to glorify and enjoy him that made me. But when you come to be at a loss, (as all in the fallen state are) "what course shall I take to glorify and enjoy God?" Why, we that are here wandering in such a wilderness as we are in, and so benighted, so bemisted as we are: if we have no instruction, no guidance, no rule, we are at a sad loss. Therefore it is the greatest joy in the world to a considering mind to have it plainly evidenced to him, that there is a discovery come forth from God, suitable to the forlorn state of the creature, a word from heaven, a written word that he himself hath delivered down to us, to teach us how we are to glorify him, and how we are to enjoy him—which will be the next thing we shall come unto.
