

them are God. 1. Obey God the Father; his words, either perceptive or minatory, must be observed. Christ himself, as man, obeyed God the Father, John iv. 34. much more than must we, Deut. xxvii. 10.

2. Obey God the Son, Pſal. ii. 12. 'Kifs the Son, left he be angry?' Kifs him with a kifs of obedience: Chriſt's commands are not grievous, 1 John v. 3. Nothing he commands, but is for our intereſt and benefit: O then kifs the Son! Why do the elders throw down their crowns at the feet of Chriſt, and fall down before the Lamb? Rev. iv. 10, 11. but to teſtify their ſubjection, and to profeſs their readineſs to ſerve and obey him.

3. Obey God the Holy Ghoſt. Our ſouls are breathed into us by the glorious Spirit, Job xxxiii. 4. 'The Spirit of God hath made me.' Our ſouls are adorned by the bleſſed Spirit; every grace is a divine ſparkle lighted in the ſoul by the Holy Ghoſt. Nay more, the Spirit of God ſanctified Chriſt's human nature: he united it with the divine, and fitted the man Chriſt to be our Mediator. Well then doth this third perſon in the Trinity, the Holy Ghoſt, deſerve to be obeyed; he is God, and this tribute of homage and obedience is to be paid him by us.

OF THE CREATION.

Q. VII. *WHAT are the decrees of God?*

Anſ. The decrees of God are his eternal purpoſe, according to the counſel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatſoever ſhall come to paſs.

I ſhould now come to ſpeak concerning the decrees of God, but I have already ſpoken ſomething to this under the attribute of God's immutability. God is unchangeable in his eſſence, and he is unchangeable in his decrees; his counſel ſhall ſtand: he hath decreed the iſſue of all things, and carries them on to their period by his providence; and therefore I ſhall proceed to the execution of his decrees.

Q. VIII. The next queſtion is, *What is the work of creation?*

Anſ. It is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, &c.

Gen. i. 1. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

The creation is glorious to behold, it is a pleaſant and fruitful ſtudy. Some think that Iſaac, when he went abroad into the fields to meditate, it was in the book of the creatures. The

creation is the heathen man's bible, the plowman's primer, the traveller's perspective-glass, through which he receives the species and representation of those infinite excellencies which are in God. The creation is a large volume, in which God's works are bound up; and this volume hath three great leaves in it, heaven, earth and sea.

The author of the creation is God, so it is in the text, 'God created.' The world was created in time, and could not be from eternity, as Aristotle thought. The world must have a maker, it could not make itself. If one should go into a far country, and see stately edifices there, he would never imagine that these could build themselves, but that there had been some artificer, there to raise such goodly structures, so this great fabric of the world could not create itself, it must have some builder and maker, and that is God; 'In the beginning God created.' To imagine that the work of the creation was not framed by the Lord Jehovah, is as if we should conceive a curious landscape to be drawn without the hand of a limner, Acts xvii. 24. 'God that made the world and all things therein.'

In the work of creation there are two things to be considered: I. The making. II. The adorning of it.

I. The making of the world. Here consider, 1. God made the world without any pre-existent matter. This is the difference between generation and creation. In generation there is *materia habilis et disposita*, some matter to work upon: but in creation there is no pre-existent matter. God brought all this glorious fabric of the world out of the womb of nothing. We see our beginning, it was of nothing. Some brag of their birth and ancestry; you see how little cause they have to boast, they came of nothing.

2. God made the world with a word. When Solomon was to build a temple, he needed many workmen, and they all had tools to work with, but God wrought without tools, Psal. xxxiii. 6. 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.' The disciples wondered that Christ could with a word calm the sea, Matth. viii. 26, 27. But it was more with a word to make the sea.

3. God made all things at first very good, Gen. i. 31. no defect nor deformity. The creation came out of God's hands a curious piece; it was a fair copy, without any blot, written with God's own fingers, Psal. viii. 3. So perfect was God's work.

II. The adorning of the world, first, God made this great lump and mass, *Rudis indigestaque moles*, and then beautified it, and put it into a dress. He divided the sea and the earth, he decked the earth with flowers, the trees with fruit: But what is beauty when it is masked over? Therefore, that we might

behold this glory, God made the light. The heavens were bespangled with the sun, moon, and stars, that so the world's beauty might be beheld and admired. God, in the creation, began with things less noble and excellent, vegetables, and sensitives; and then the rational creatures, angels and men. Man was the most exquisite piece in the creation: He is a microcosm, or little world. Man was made with deliberation and counsel, Gen. i. 26. 'Let us make man.' It is the manner of artificers to be more than ordinary accurate, when they are about their master-pieces. Man was to be a master-piece of this visible world, therefore God did consult about the making of so rare a piece. A solemn counsel of the sacred persons in the Trinity was called, 'Let us make man, and let us make him in our own image.' On the king's coin his image or effigies is stamped; so God stamps his image on man, and made him partake of many divine qualities.

I shall speak, 1. Of the parts of man's body: (1.) The Head, the most excellent architectonical part, it is the fountain of spirits, and the seat of reason. In nature the head is the best piece, but in grace the heart excels. (2.) The Eye, it is the beauty of the face; it shines and sparkles like a lesser sun in the body. The eye occasions much sin, and therefore well may it have tears in it. (3.) The Ear, which is the conduit-pipe through which knowledge is conveyed. Better lose our seeing than our hearing; for 'faith cometh by hearing,' Rom. x. 17. To have an ear open to God, is the best jewel on the ear. (4.) The Tongue. David calls the tongue his glory, Psal. xvi. 9. because it is an instrument to set forth the glory of God: the soul at first was a viol in tune to praise God, and the tongue did make the music. God hath given us two ears, but one tongue, to shew that we should be swift to hear, but slow to speak. God hath set a double fence before the tongue, the teeth and the lips, to teach us to be wary that we offend not with our tongue. (5.) The Heart, this is a noble part, and seat of life.

2. The Soul of man: This is the man of the man. Man, in regard of his soul, partakes with the angels; nay, as Plato saith, The understanding, will, and conscience are a glass that resemble the Trinity. The soul is the diamond in the ring, the soul is a vessel of honour; God himself is served in this vessel. It is a sparkle of celestial brightness, saith Damascene. If David did so admire the rare contexture and workmanship of his body, Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15. 'I am wonderfully made, I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.' If the cabinet be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel? How richly is the soul embroidered? thus you see how glorious a work the creation is, and man especially, who is the epitome of the world.

Qu. *But why did God make the world?*

Ans. 1. *Negatively*: Not for himself: he did not need it, being infinite. He was happy before the world was, in reflecting upon his own sublime excellencies and perfections. 2. God did not make the world to be a place of mansion for us, we are not to abide here for ever. Heaven is the mansion-house, John xiv. 2. The world is only a passage-room to eternity; the world is to us as the wilderness was to Israel, not to rest in, but to travel thro' to the glorious Canaan. The world is a tiring-room to dress our souls in, not a place where we are to stay for ever. The apostle tells us of the world's funerals, 2Pet. iii. 10. 'The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.'

2. *Positively*. God made the world to demonstrate his own glory. The world is a looking-glass, in which we may see the power and goodness of God shine forth; 'The heavens declare the glory of God,' Ps. xix. 1. The world is like a curious piece of arras or tapestry, in which we may see the skill and wisdom of him that made it.

Use 1. Did God create the world? This convinceth us of the truth of his Godhead: to create is proper to a deity, Acts xvii. 24. This convinced Plato of a Deity, when he saw all the world could not make a fly. Thus God proves himself to be the true God, and distinguisheth himself from idols, Jer. x. 11. It is written in Chaldee, 'Thus shall ye say to them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish.' Who but God can create? The creation is enough to convince the heathen that there is a God. There are two books out of which God will judge and condemn the heathen, viz. the book of Conscience, Rom. iii. 5. 'Who have the law written in their heart:' and the book of the Creation, Rom. ii. 20. 'The invisible things of him are clearly seen by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.' The world is full of emblems and hieroglyphics; every star in the sky, every bird that flies in the air, is a witness against the heathen. A creature could not make itself.

2. Here is a mighty support for faith, God creates. He that made all things with a word, what cannot he do? He can create strength in weakness; he can create a supply of our wants. What a foolish question was that, Ps. lxxviii. 19. 'Can he prepare a table in the wilderness?' Cannot he that made the world do much more? Ps. cxxiv. 8. 'Our help standeth in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.' Rest on this God for help, who made heaven and earth. The work of creation, as it is a monument of God's power, so it is a stay to faith. Is thy heart hard? he can with a word create softness. Is it unclean, he can create purity? Psal. li. 10. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' Is the church of God low,

he can create Jerusalem a praise, Isa. lxxv. 18. No such golden pillar for faith to stay upon, as a creating power.

3. Did God make this world full of beauty and glory, every thing very good? then, what an evil thing is sin, that hath put out of frame the whole creation? Sin hath much eclipsed the beauty, soured the sweetness, and marred the harmony of the world. How bitter is that gall, a drop whereof can embitter a whole sea? Sin hath brought vanity and vexation into the world, yea, a curse. 'God cursed the ground for man's sake,' Gen. iii. There were several fruits of the curse.

1. 'In sorrow thou shalt eat it,' verse 17. By that word Sorrow, is to be understood all the troubles and cares of this life. 2. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,' ver. 19. In innocency Adam did till the ground, (he must not live idly) but it was rather a delight than a labour; that tilling was without toiling. The eating in sorrow, and the sweat of the brow, came in after sin. 3. 'Thorns and Thistles shall the ground bring forth,' verse 18.

Q. *Whether in innocency did not the earth bear thorns, because it is threatened as a punishment?*

Ans. It is likely it did bear thorns; for, when God had done creating, he made no new species or kinds of things: but the meaning is, Now, after sin the earth shall bring forth more plenty of thorns, and now those thorns should be hurtful, and choke the corn, which hurtful quality was not in them before. Ever since the fall, all the comforts of this life have a thorn and a thistle in them. 4. The fourth fruit of the curse was the driving man out of paradise, ver. 24. 'So he drove out the man.' God at first brought Adam into paradise, as into an house ready furnished, or as a king into his throne, Gen. i. 28. 'Have dominion over every living thing that moveth;' now God's driving Adam out of paradise, signified his dethroning and banishing him, that he might look after an heavenly and a better paradise. 5. A fifth fruit of the curse was death, ver. 19. 'To dust thou shalt return.' Death was not natural to Adam, it came in after sin. Josephus is of opinion, man should have died tho' he had a longer term of years added to his life; but out of question death grew out of the root of sin; the apostle saith, Rom. v. 12. 'By sin came death.' See then how cursed a thing sin is, that hath brought so many curses upon the creation. If we will not hate sin for its deformity, let us hate it for the curse it brings.

4. Did God make this glorious world? Did he make every thing good? Was there in the creature so much beauty and sweetness? Oh! then what sweetness is there in God? *Quicquid efficit tale illu est magis tale*; the cause is always more noble than the effect. 'Think with yourselves, is there so much ex-

cellency in house and lands? then how much more is there in God that made these? Is there beauty in a rose? what beauty then is there in Christ, the rose of Sharon? doth oil make the face shine? Pf. civ. 15. How will the light of God's countenance make it shine? Doth wine cheer the heart? O what virtue is there in the true vine! how doth the blood of this grape cheer the heart? Is the fruit of the garden sweet? how delicious are the fruits of the Spirit? Is a gold mine so precious? how precious is he who founded this mine? What is Christ, in whom are hid all treasures? Col. ii. 3. We should ascend from the creature to the Creator. If there be any comfort here below, how much more is there in God, who made all these things? How unreasonable is it, that we should delight in the world, and not much more in him that made it? How should our hearts be set on God, and how should we long to be with God, who hath infinitely more sweetness in him than any creature?

Use 2. Of exhortation. 1. Did God create the world? Let us wisely observe those works of creation? God hath given us not only the book of the scriptures to read in, but the book of the creation: look up to the heavens, they shew much of God's glory; the sun gilds the world with its bright beams: behold the stars, their regular motion in their orbs, their magnitude, their light, their influence. We may see God's glory blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. Look into the sea, and see the wonders of God in the deep, Psal. cvii. 24. Look into the air, there the birds make melody, and sing forth the praises of their Creator. Look into the earth, there we may wonder at the nature of minerals, the power of the loadstone, the virtue of herbs; see the earth decked as a bride with flowers; all these are the glorious effects of God's power. God hath wrought the creation as with curious needle-work, that we may observe his wisdom and goodness, and give him the praise due to him, Psal. civ. 24. 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.'

2. Did God create all things? Let us obey our Maker. We are his *Jure Creationis*; we owe ourselves to him: If another gives us our maintenance, we think ourselves bound to serve him; much more should we serve and obey God who gives us our life, Acts xvii. 28. 'In him we live and move.' God hath made every thing for man's service, the corn for nourishment, the beasts for usefulness, the birds for music, that man should be for God's service. The rivers come from the sea, and they run into the sea again. All we have is from God; let us honour our Creator, and live to him that made us.

3. Did God make our bodies out of the dust, and that dust out of nothing? Let this keep down pride. When God would

humble Adam he useth this expression, 'Out of the dust wast thou taken,' Gen. iii. 16. Why art thou proud O dust and ashes? Thou art made out of coarse metal; *Cum sis humi, limus, cur non humilimus?* Ber. David saith, 'I was curiously wrought,' Pl. cxxxix. Thy being curiously wrought, may make thee thankful; but being made of the dust, may keep thee humble. If thou hast beauty, it is but well-coloured earth. Thy body is but air and dust mingled together, and this dust will drop into the dust. When the Lord had said of the judges, they were gods, Plal. lxxxii. 6. Lest they should grow proud, he tells them, they were dying gods, ver. 7. 'Ye shall die like men.'

4. Did God create our souls after his image, but we lost it? let us never leave it till we are restored to God's image again. We have now got the devil's image in pride, malice, envy, let us get God's image restored, which consists in knowledge and righteousness, Col. iii. 10. Grace is our best beauty, it makes us like God and angels: as the sun is to the world, so is holiness to the soul. Let us go to God to repair his image in us: Lord! thou hast once made me, make me anew, sin hath defaced thy image in me, O draw it again by the pencil of the Holy Ghost.



THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

Q. XI. *WHAT* are God's works of providence?

Ans. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

The work of God's providence, John v. 27. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' The great God hath rested from the works of creation, he doth not create any new species of things, Gen. i. 7. He rested from all his works: and therefore this scripture must needs be meant of God's works of providence, 'My Father worketh, and I work.' Plal. ciii. 19. 'His kingdom ruleth over all;' *i. e.* His providential kingdom. Now, for the clearing of this point, I shall,

1. Shew you that there is a providence. 2. What that providence is. 3. Lay down some maxims or propositions concerning the providence of God.

1st, That there is a providence: there is no such a thing as blind fate, but there is a providence that guides and governs in the world, Prov. xvi. 33. 'This lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.'

2^{dly}, What this providence is? I answer, Providence is God's ordering all issues and events of things, after the counsel of his