

wealth no longer. Worldly men are like the mice, which, they say, feed in the golden mines; they eat the ore, but do not deliver it up again till they die, and are cut asunder. It is said of wicked men, 'their bellies are filled with hid treasure,' and when they die they leave their substance to their children, Ps. xvii. 14; but the children of God do good in their lives.

SERMON VII.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.—HEB. xi. 3.

IN these words the apostle beginneth the history of faith, and therefore goeth so high as God's ancient work of creation. His drift is to prove that faith satisfieth itself in the word of God, though nothing be seen; and he proveth it in the first instance and exercise of faith that ever was in the world—the creation.

In the words you may observe—(1.) The doctrine of the creation laid down; (2.) The means whereby we come to the understanding of it.

1. The doctrine of the creation is delivered in all the necessary circumstances of it.

[1.] The matter framed—*τοὺς αἰῶνας*, the ages, that is, the world which hath endured so many ages; the essence and duration of a thing being so near akin, they are often taken for one another: Eph. ii. 2, 'Wherein in time past ye walked, *κατ' αἰῶνα*, according to the course of this world:' which is necessary to note against the Socinians, who to evade that testimony for the Godhead of Christ: Heb. i. 2, 'By whom also he made the worlds,' understand it of the ages, and the collection of the church in all times.

[2.] The manner—*κατηρτίσθαι*, he curiously jointed and made it, and digested it into an exquisite rank and frame.

[3.] The instrument—*ῥήματι Θεοῦ*—*By the word of God*. It may be taken either for his substantial word, or his word of power, by which all things were produced out of nothing; 'He spake, and it was done,' Ps. xxxiii. 9.

[4.] The term from whence God's action took its rise—*ἐκ μὴ φαινομένων*—*Of things which do not appear*. *ἐκ* doth not properly note the matter; and when we say, God made the world out of nothing, our meaning is not, that nothing is the matter whereof the world is made, as if God should bestow a new fashion and shape upon nothing; but only that it is the *terminus a quo*, not *materia ex qua*, as much as to say, God made the world when nothing was before; God had not any matter to work upon. There are some difficulties attending the Greek phrase, but I shall consider them hereafter.

2. The means whereby we come to understand this great mystery—*πίστει νοῦμεν*—*By faith we understand*. Reason will give us a

glimpse, but by faith alone we can unfold the riddle and mystery of the world's creation.

I begin with the means of knowledge as being first in the words, 'By faith we understand.' Whence observe—

1. That it is of great profit and comfort to believers to consider the creation.

2. That we can only understand the truth and wonders of the creation by faith.

The first point is a preparative to the whole discourse; it is this—

Doct. 1. It is a necessary exercise for the children of God to turn their minds to the creation.

Reasons:—

1. It discovereth much of God. God hath engraven his name upon his works; as those that make watches or any curious pieces write their names upon them; or, as he that carved a buckler for Minerva had so curiously inlaid his own name, that it could not be razed out without defacing the whole work; so hath God. The creatures are but a draft and portraiture of the divine glory. In the creatures we may discern—(1.) His essence; (2.) His attributes.

[1.] His essence. Creation is the true note of the true God; the first cause is the supreme being; therefore creation always is avouched on the behalf of the divine majesty of God: Jer. x. 11, 12, 'Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched forth the heavens by his discretion.' Jonah i. 9, 'I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.' Isa. xlv. 6, 7, 'I am the Lord, and there is none else; I form the light, and create darkness,' &c. and ver. 8, 'I the Lord have created it.' So the apostles: Acts xiv. 15, 'That ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.' Acts xvii. 24, 'God that made the world, and all things therein.' Rom. i. 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.' This was the heathens' bible, and out of this will they be arraigned at the day of Christ: the creatures will witness against them—they discovered an eternal essence, but the world discovered it not. God at first spake to the world not by words but things, and taught them by hieroglyphics. The scriptures are but a comment upon this book of the creatures.

[2.] His attributes. They are all engraven upon the creatures, but he that runneth may read these three attributes, goodness, power, and wisdom, which call for love, reverence, and trust. *Ἐποίησεν ὡς ἀγαθὸς τὸ χρήσιμον, ὡς σοφὸς τὸ κάλλιστον, ὡς δύνάτος τὸ μέγιστον*—Basil. The goodness of God is seen in the usefulness of the creatures to man; the power of God in the stupendousness and wonderfulness of the works; and the wisdom of God in the apt structure, constitution, and order of all things. First he createth, then distinguisheth, then adorneth. The first work was to create heaven and earth out of nothing; there is his power. God's next work is a wise distribution and ordination, he distinguisheth night from day, darkness from light, waters above the

firmament from waters beneath the firmament; the sea from the dry land; there is his wisdom. Then he decked the earth with plants and beasts, the sea with fishes, the air with birds, the firmament with stars; there is his goodness. Let us explain these a little more particularly.

(1.) His goodness. The creation is nothing else but an effusion of the goodness of God: Ps. cxv. 3, 'Our God is in heaven, he hath done whatsoever he pleased.' He acteth at liberty; he might have made it sooner or later; the only reason is the counsel of his own will: Rev. iv. 11, 'Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' Creatures work out of a servile necessity. The trinity was not solitary. God was happy enough without us, and had a fulness and sufficiency of happiness within himself, only he would have us to participate of his goodness. God's great aim was to communicate his goodness to creatures; and therefore in making the world, he did not only aim at his own glory, but the benefit of man, that man might have a place for his exercise and a dwelling for his eternal rest. A place for his exercise: Isa. xlv. 18, 'He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited;' so Ps. cxv. 16, 'The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men.' In heaven God sitteth in his palace, in the midst of his best creatures; but the earth, the round world is ours. And heaven was prepared before the beginning of the world for their place of rest: Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' His love was towards us before the world was, and we shall reap the fruits of it, when the world shall be no more.

(2.) His power. God brought all things out of the womb of nothing; his *fiat* was enough: Isa. xl. 26, 'Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth.' The force of the cause appeareth in the effects, and God's power in the creatures. This is the most visible attribute: Rom. i. 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.' Men touched with no sense or reverence of religion, yet will have this in their mouths, God Almighty.

(3.) His wisdom. The admirableness and comely variety of God's works doth easily offer it to our thoughts. In the work you may discern a wise workman: Ps. cxxxvi. 5, 'To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.' So Prov. iii. 19, 'The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.' The wisdom of God appeareth—(1.) In the order of making; (2.) In the order of placing all creatures.

(1st.) In making of them. In simple things, God began with those which are most perfect, and came nearest to his own essence. His first creature is light, which of all qualities is most pure and defecate, and is not stained by passing through places most impure. The first garment God put on in the creatures' eyes was light; Ps. civ. 2, 'Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment.' Then all the elements in mixt bodies; God took another method, from imperfect to perfect: first, things that have a being, as the firmament; then life, as plants; then

sense, as beasts; then reason, as man. First, God would provide the places of heaven and earth, and then the creatures to dwell in them; first the food, then the beasts. Provision was made for the inhabitants of the earth, as grass for beasts, and light for all living and moving creatures. God provided for the necessities of beasts, ere he would bring them into the world. God made first plants, that have but a growing life; then beasts, fishes, fowls, that have a feeling life; then man that hath a rational life. God would teach us to go from good to better. Man was made last, as most excellent; his palace is furnished with all things necessary, and then like a prince he is sent into the world to rule and reign.

(2dly.) In disposing all things into their apt cells for the beauty and service of the whole. There are not such great beasts in the earth as in the sea, to avoid a waste of food, which would be consumed by the beasts of the land, to the prejudice of man. All things are wonderfully made.

2. It is a wonderful advantage to faith to give us hope and consolation in the greatest distresses. The whole creation is a standing monument of God's power; we see what he can do: Ps. cxxiv. 8, 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.' As long as heaven and earth is standing, we need not distrust God's power: Jer. xxxii. 17, 'Ah Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power, and stretched out arm; and there is nothing too hard for thee.' So Ps. cxlvi. 5, 6, 'Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the Lord his God, which made heaven, and earth, and sea, and all that therein is, which keepeth truth for ever.' The works of creation are but pawns and pledges of the possibility and certainty of every thing promised. Every promise is as powerful as God's first creating word, 'let there be light,' let there be day.

3. It putteth us in mind of our duty.

[1.] To stir up in us a reverence and dread of God above the creatures. We are used to things of sense, they work with us. Make much of the creator, and the creatures shall do thee no harm: Acts iv. 24, 'Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.'

[2.] To stir up humility to God: Rom. ix. 20, 'Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?' Isa. xlv. 9, 'Wo unto him that striveth with his maker; let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou; or thy work, He hath no hands?' Gen. xviii. 27, 'Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.'

[3.] To make us humble and kind to men: Acts xvii. 26, 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth.' *Omnis sanguis concolor*, Isa. lviii. 7, 'That thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh.'

Use. It serveth to quicken us to think of the creation. But oh, how backward, cold and sluggish are we in this work! either we use the creatures as beasts, without thankfulness, and looking up to the

creator; or else, as philosophers, there is more curiosity than profit in our researches: but I observe christians are coldly affected with such an argument. The causes are these—

1. We have an higher light. Sense in beasts is more acute, so reason in heathens, because it is their only light. But this should not be, we should not slight the works of God, because of a higher revelation. When a man is able to read, he should not lay aside the use of letters. The creation is a good primer for us to spell in, though not so good as the grammar of the scriptures. When we have a free use of reason, we find a good help in books; in youth, because we have no experience, we are more prone to thoughts of atheism; therefore, says Solomon, Eccles. xii. 1, 'Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth.' But excellent arguments for conviction may be drawn hence, when we have higher knowledge.

2. Because these objects are familiar and frequent. *Homini ingentium est magis nova, quam magna mirari.* This is the wretched disposition of man, to admire things that are new, rather than things that are great. We give money to see strange beasts; you may think with yourselves, when you see people pressing to see a new sight, there is a greater miracle every day; we are injurious to God, when we do not glorify him in his creatures, when we do carelessly pass by such goodly works.

3. This proceeds from laziness. It is easier to read a chapter in the word, than the book of the creatures, the act is more outward and corporeal, the other putteth us to the pains and trouble of discourse: there is no duty so spiritual as meditation, therefore we withdraw the shoulder. Though this was pleasant to David, Ps. civ. 34, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.'

4. From worldliness. Our heads and hearts are so taken up about our own work, that we have little leisure to mind God's; like a company of ants, we crawl up and down, and do not regard the great things about us.

Here I shall— (1.) Lay down motives to quicken us to this necessary work of reflecting upon the creation of the world, that was made by the power of God out of nothing. (2.) Offer directions how to reflect upon the creature with comfort and profit.

First, for the motives.

1. The creatures are apt to teach us. All the creatures of God, they have a voice, and read a lecture to us of the glory of the divinity. The first bible was the book of nature; God spake to the world, not by words, but by things, and taught men by what he had written of his glory upon the creation. As many creatures as there are, so many letters there are, out of which we may spell God; the book is written within with glorious angels, and without with corporeal substances that discover the glory of God; it may teach us unspeakable wisdom, unmeasurable goodness, infinite power. The world is a book, God's power was the hand with which it was written, and his wisdom was the pen, and the letters are the creatures; some are lesser letters, some greater, but out of the whole there is a volume of praise to the creator. Nay, the world is not only a book, but a teacher; not only a dead letter, but a living voice: Ps. xix. 1, 'The heavens declare the glory

of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work.' Lesser creatures have a voice to proclaim the excellency of their creator. An ant and a gnat may take the pulpit, and preach a God to us. 'Their line is gone out into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world,' saith the psalmist, ver. 4. We should so hearken to the creature, as if we did hear God himself speak to us; 'and day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge,' ver. 2. Other preachers are soon spent and tired, but the creatures are constant preachers, always calling upon us night and day to mind God; and, ver. 3. 'There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.' Though the languages of all nations scattered over the world be very different, yet there is one book may be read in every country: the heavens speak Greek to the Grecians: they speak English to us: so many creatures, so many preachers there are of God's wisdom, power, and goodness. Nay, the creature that seems most gross, the dull earth, the heaviest and grossest element, and the mute fishes, proclaim God: Job xii, 8, 'Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee, and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.' Though the fishes have no sound, cannot make so much as a rude noise, though they have no voice, yet they are able to preach God unto us, and teach us, that there is a sovereign providence by which all things are guided and governed.

2. God hath made man fit to learn, he hath given us faculties to this purpose, that we may understand the creatures: Eccles. iii. 11, 'He hath set the world in their heart.' The great work of God's Spirit is to pluck the world out of our hearts; what is the meaning then of it? He hath not only given us the creature to contemplate, but an ability, an earnest desire, to search into the secrets of nature, that we may understand the voice of the creation. Men are the most considerable, and the most considering part of the world. The creatures praise God, that is, they offer matter of praise: Ps. cxlv. 10, 'All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee;' they are as a well-tuned harp, but man maketh the music. We should not be silent, when the creatures proclaim their creator. Man is made to consider all the rest of the creatures, therefore is placed in the middle of the world, that he may look round about him. Man hath reason given him; and shall man that hath reason make no more use of the stars than the creatures do, only to see by them? Man is to discourse of them. He hath given us a body bored through with five senses to let out thoughts, and to take in objects; to taste the goodness of God in the creatures, and see divinity in them, and hear the voice by which they proclaim the glory of God. A philosopher, being asked, why he had eyes? answered, *Ut miracula Dei contempler.* Creatures are mutes, when neglected, and vowels, when we consider them.

3. God himself delights in the view of his own works. God observed every day's work, and said, it was good; he took a complacency in it: Prov. viii. 30, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth.' Ps. civ. 31. The Lord rejoiceth in his works: God rejoiceth in the view of his own works; therefore there is great reason for us to study and contemplate them.

4. This was God's great aim and end in making man, that he

might have a witness and publisher of his own glory. That this was the aim of God, to have his works viewed distinctly, may be discovered by many things; that he did prolong his work for six days, when he might have made all things in one day. And this was the reason why he made man last, that when he was made he might contemplate all the rest of the creatures. *Deus te quasi testem, laudatoremque tanti operis sui in hunc mundum induxit*, Lactantius. When God had made the whole world, there wanted one to be a witness of the work, one to admire the greatness and goodness of it, therefore man is brought into the world for this purpose; when God's feast was prepared, then man was invited to come and taste. The first sabbath was appointed for contemplation; it is the sweetest rest that we can enjoy, to view the works of God. Now consider what an injury and unthankfulness will this be to God, to cross the aim of the creation, and to pass by such a goodly frame with a careless eye. If a father should build a great house or palace for his son, and he should not so much as deign to look upon it, what an ingratitude would this be! So when God hath furnished his palace with such variety of all creatures, then not to consider and regard the operation of his hands, what an unkind return would this be! If you should make a sumptuous feast, and your guests will not so much as look upon your table, you would count this a great affront; so this is a great affront to the divine majesty, not to look upon his works, since the beauty and order of the creation is a feast for the mind. The world is not only the house of man, but the temple of God. Many came to see Solomon's temple from afar, and many go to Jerusalem to see the temple of the sepulchre; you need not go so far. When the ethnics slandered the primitive christians, that they had no temple, they answered, *Dei templum esse univrsam hoc quod cernitur*—this world that we behold is God's temple.

5. The creatures signify nothing to us, if we do not consider them; without meditation we receive no good: Ps. cxlv. 10, 'All thy works praise thee.' The creatures are as a well-tuned instrument, but it is man that must make the music. The creatures, if they be not regarded, are but mutes, they make no sound. There we read the beauty, wisdom, and majesty of God: Job xii. 7, 'Ask now of the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.' Ask the creatures questions. Though the creatures have neither voice nor ears, yet we may consult and confer with them; when we think of them, they answer and resolve the questions put to them, though not to the ear, yet to the conscience. Ask the creatures, Is there a God? they answer, Yea. What kind of God is he? they will answer, A wise, powerful, and good God. By meditation we may easily make out these collections. It is great unthankfulness, that the creatures should proclaim the glory of God to no purpose; that we should be silent when the creatures speak. Christ said, the stones would cry if these should hold their peace. Shall the heavens declare the works of God, and shall man regard them not? Shall we be deaf, when the creatures don't cease to cry to us.

6. It is a duty that lies upon all reasonable creatures. (1.) The angels delight in this work; Job xxxviii. 7, it is said, when the earth was

founded, 'the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;' that is, when God first laid the foundations of the heavens, the angels, like birds at the break of day, welcome the dawning of the creation and the first appearances of the love of God to the creature, and still they are praising God for his essence and works. It cannot literally and properly be understood. There is but one morning star, not many; the stars were not created when the foundations of the earth were laid, not till the fourth day, Gen. i. 16. The angels are as it were spiritual stars. God is the sun and angels the stars. God is the Father of lights, and those angels are the stars derived from God. (2.) The saints of God, they make it their work. Much of the scripture is spent in this purpose. The whole book of Job is interspersed with several passages, chap. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix. David is a professed student in the works of God; many psalms are composed to give God the glory of the creation—Ps. viii. and xix., civ., cvi., and cxlvii. Meditation is the most spiritual part of worship, therefore to the children of God it is wondrous sweet. It is true Christ crucified is a chief object, Ephes. iii. 10, but the world created must have a room and place. (3.) The heathens by the light of nature acknowledge it to be their duty. I might produce many instances; Tully saith, *Animarum, ingeniorumque naturale quoddam pabulum est contemplatio, consideratioque nature*: consideration of nature is the food of the soul, the solace and refreshment of the rational soul. Another saith, *Θεατῆς ἐγένετο τῶν ἐργῶν Θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος*; the world is a great theatre wherein the creation is acted and drawn forth; God is the author, and man is made to be the spectator. Another said, *Os hominum sublime dedit, cælumque tueri jussit*—God has given man an erect countenance, that he might look up to heaven. Anaxagoras being asked, why he was born? answered, *Εἰς θεωρίαν ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης καὶ οὐρανοῦ*—For contemplation of sun, moon and heavens. The sun, moon, and stars are the natural apostles; though they cannot preach Christ, yet they preach God. Heathens must be called to account at the last day for not reading the book of nature: 'He left not himself without a witness,' Acts xiv. 17; and the apostle tells heathens, when justice shall make a solemn triumph, Acts xvii. 31, 'He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.' What will become of us, that have not only the book of nature, but the comment of scripture? God hath unfolded the meaning of the creature in the word. We shall have many witnesses against us at the day of the Lord.

7. It is a work that is of great profit; partly to heighten fancy, and make it fit for meditation. Many find meditation a burden because of the barrenness and leanness that is in their understandings. Oh! practise upon the creation, and you will find fancy to be much elevated and raised. Anthony the devout hermit, that is so much spoken of in ecclesiastical story, being asked, how he could profit in knowledge, and spend his days in the desert without men and books? answered, I have one book I am always studying, and turning over day and night; and so I find my hours to be both pleasant and profitable; and it consists of three leaves and three letters; the three leaves of it are the heavens, the earth, and the waters. The letters are the inhabitants of these houses. If you look into the heavens, there are stars, and angels, and

fowls ; if you walk on the earth, there are living creatures, and chiefly man, if you look into the seas, there are fishes. Partly because you will hereby have an excellent advantage to know God, and keep God present in your thoughts. Man is much led by sense ; in the benefit of fruitful seasons, and temperament of the heavens, and plenty of fruits of the earth, you may be reading the goodness of God ; in thunders, lightnings, tempests, earthquakes, hail, snow, pestilence, comets, you may read the majesty and the terrors of the Lord ; in the guidance of the world, and measure of the stars, and all created beings, you may observe the wisdom of God ; so that religion is as it were made sensible. And partly, you will have this profit, a sweet opportunity to compare the old and the new creation together. Eph. ii. 10, We are said to be 'the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus to good works.' The old world and the new heart, they are both God's work : Eph. iv. 24, 'That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' There you may see beauty and order brought out of nothing. Every man is a lesser world, a model of the universe ; the globe in the head, the sun and moon in the eyes ; there is the liver like the ocean, which receiveth all the lesser streams, conveyed by the channels of the veins. But now a new man is a new creature, a new world ; instead of the sun that shines in the firmament, there is the sun of righteousness, the ebbings and flowings of the influences of grace, the air which we receive by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and blow out again in prayers ; there is the fire, by which the Holy Ghost warmeth and inflameth the heart. Many such sweet resemblances might be made.

8. If there were no profit, yet it is a matter of much spiritual delight to reflect upon the creature. Man is a creature taken with variety and beauty. Now what prospect is more various and beautiful than the works of God ? when we are weary of one object we may go to another. Unclasp the book of nature, turn over a few leaves of that large volume, see what delight and contentment reason will find ; when we walk abroad, these meditations will be best company for us. Look upon the spangled firmament, bestudded everywhere with stars, like so many golden nails fixed and struck into it, or like so many little holes in a thick covering, disclosing the beauty and glory that is within. There you may see the sun like a giant rejoicing to run his course, or like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber. There are the influences of the Pleiades, and the bands of Orion ; there is Mazzaroth in his season, and Arcturus with his sons. There the moon like a rich diamond shines out with a foil of darkness and blackness, to set forth the lustre of it ; and the constellations are as so many several families of stars ; all which may ravish us with delight and wonder. If you come lower, consider the fire that burns not, the treasures of snow and hail, meteors as much feared as wondered at. There are the clouds, which Job calls the bottles of God, which, like so many tankard-bearers, convey their influences to all the houses of the earth, or like water-pots, refresh the garden of the world. Come we lower, and there is the earth interlaid with water, enamelled and decked with flowers and grass, variety of beasts in the field, and plentiful fruits of the land. And in the sea, as the papists say of Aquinas, *quot articulos, tot miracula* ; so many fishes, so many

wonders! the number, vastness, motion, perfection of all these do loudly proclaim the praise of God. Look upon yourselves, what delight is it to contemplate our own nature! Our generation is wonderful; we are poured out as milk into the womb, curdled like cheese, fenced with skin and bones. In the body there is an admirable structure, all the members conspiring to the beauty, decency, and use of the whole: Ps. cxxxix. 14, 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' Then if we look upon the soul, there is a sparkle of the divinity, and beam of God. Who can trace the flights and workings of reason, and the several traverses of the spirit of a man? Look on the lesser, the most inconsiderable creatures. Pauses in music serve to make harmony, as well as the more perfect notes. Anstin in some respects preferred a gnat before the sun, to see a little animated dust move up and down in such regular motions, with such handsomeness of body, eyes, feet, and wings; it mightily delights and sets out the glory of God.

SERMON VIII.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.—HEB. xi. 3.

Secondly, I come to give you some directions how to reflect upon the creatures with comfort and profit.

I. Be much in occasional meditation. There is nothing within the whole circumference of nature but will give matter to you. The creatures that are all round about you, are as the phylacteries that were worn under the law; the Jews were to have 'fringes on the borders of their garments, that they may look upon them, and remember all the commandments of the Lord to do them,' Numb. xv. 38, 39. The creatures are as it were those fringes and borders, that wherever we turn our eyes, we may read God in the creature. Therefore when you are walking in the fields, or going to your country-houses, consider the works of the Lord; look round about upon the beautiful frame before your eyes; do but consider what a rich canopy God hath stretched out over your heads; you should be full of good highway thoughts, Luke xxiv. 17; Christ inquires after their highway speeches; 'What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk?' So the Lord looks after your highway thoughts. When you see the sun glittering and shining forth in his beams like a bridegroom newly dressed, you should be then forming of some thoughts of the excellency and glory of God, who is the maker of it. When you pass by the sea, consider the immensity and dreadfulness of God by the horror of the waves and his wonderful works: Ps. cvii. 23, 24, 'They that go down into the sea, see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.' When you are cast upon storms and tempests, remember by whose breath all these are blown. When you hear the thunder, this is the

voice of the Lord ; look upon it as a trumpet the Lord hath sounded to call the world together to a dread and reverence of his majesty. There are day thoughts, and there are night thoughts ; David had his day meditation, and his night meditation ; the 19th psalm seems to be penned in the day, for there he speaks only of the sun ; when David in the morning saw the sun breaking out, and enlightening the world, then he thinks of the glory of God. And the 8th psalm was a night meditation : ‘ Lord, when I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars that thou hast ordained, what is man ! ’ It is probable that meditation was in the night, because he doth not mention the sun, but the moon and stars.

2. There must be also set and solemn meditation upon special occasions. Set meditation brings in profit to the soul. Passant and transient thoughts are more pleasant, but not so profitable. Meditation that is deliberate, is of most use. Usually sudden thoughts pass away from us, and do not return with such advantage ; as children shoot away their arrows at rovers, and do not look after them ; or as a ball stricken in the open field goes out from us but a ball stricken against a wall doth return to our hand again ; so those passant thoughts go away from us ; but when there is a fixed mark, some bound set, those thoughts return to our hand again with much comfort and spiritual advantage ; when we aim at some particular thing and fix our mark, our thoughts return with advantage. Scattered rays heat, but burn not. When the beams of the sun are contracted in a burning-glass, a narrow place, then they fire ; so when our thoughts are more particular and set, then they warm the heart, and return to us with advantage. There are several special occasions when we should propose to ourselves the thoughts of the creation.

[1.] When we are not affected with the majesty and glory of God. Usually we are moved more with God’s benefits than with his glorious essence. This is our infirmity ; we should rise up to such a height as this, to love God as he is, *diligibilis naturá*, lovely in himself, all self-respects secluded and laid aside. This is pure love without self-love, when we can love God, and respect God for the greatness and glory of his essence, though there were no influences and comfort going out from him to the creature ; for then he is honoured as the chiefest good, and the utmost end. But how should we get our hearts affected with God’s glorious essence ? Study the perfections of God in the creation, that you may not only love him for his influences of mercy, but reverence him for his majesty and glory : Ps. civ. 1, ‘ Bless the Lord, O my soul : O Lord my God, thou art very great.’ David would praise and bless God for his greatness ; how doth he do it ? he spends his thoughts upon the creation throughout the psalm.

[2.] When you are haunted with thoughts of atheism. The best of God’s children are sometimes tried and exercised in the sorest way, and we are apt to doubt sometimes of the supreme truth, whether there be a God or no ? Now if your hearts make any question of it, go ask of the creature, as Job saith, ‘ Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee, and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee : or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee ; ’ nay he sends them to the fishes, that are mute and make no noise,—‘ And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto

thee. Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?' Job xii. 7-9. The world could not make itself; that which is supported by another must needs be framed by another. Now the creatures hanging upon God as a garment upon a nail; take away the nail, the garment falls down; they all proclaim they have an excellent, powerful, and a wise creator. If you see a great house, and nothing in it but mice and vermin, you conclude, surely the mice could not frame such a glorious palace, neither could the pieces come together by chance. As the letters of Homer's poem could not come together by chance; so survey the creation, all these things could not come together by chance, they must be made by something; the very heathens could argue thus.

[3.] When you doubt of the promises of God, because there are appearances to the contrary. When you look for trouble think of the creation, that you may trust in the power of God when you see no means. Tully brings an Epicurean disputing thus against the creation: If the world were created, where are the tools and instruments? where are the workmen employed in so great a work as this is? and because these could not be assigned, he concludes such a thing could never be, but all things came together by chance. So we say, If the Lord means to bless us and do us good, where are the instruments? and where is the appearance of any probability in the course of second causes? 'Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath,' saith the prophet. Isa. li. 6; from whence came all this excellent harmony that is in the parts of the creation? So Isa. xl. 1, 2, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.' God sends his prophet with glad tidings to afflicted Israel; ay, but where is the comforter? we are under sorrows and bondage. Consider who made the heavens, ver. 12, 'Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?' See he produceth the works of the creation for their encouragement. So David, Ps. cxxiv. 8, 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth;' that is, as long as I see such a glorious fabric before mine eyes, heaven and earth made out of nothing, I will never doubt and distrust God.

[4.] When your hearts faint in regard of outward supplies and temporal provision, survey the creatures. Who is it that feeds the beasts of the earth, and makes some of the fowl fattest in winter when provisions are scarcest? At whose charge are all the fish of the sea and the beasts of the forest maintained? Who spreads a table for all creatures? The world is but God's great common; he is landlord, he looks after all his creatures, that they be all supplied: Mat. vi. 25, 'Take no thought what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, nor yet for your body what you shall put on; is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?' As if he had said, God that gave you life out of nothing, certainly he will give you food; and he that gave you a body, he will provide for you raiment. And Christ sends us to the creation, ver. 26, 'Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them; are ye not much better than they?' So David, Ps. cxlv. 16, 'Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.'

[5.] Greaten the privileges of your covenant interest. Now if you would know what it is to have God for your God in covenant, consider the creation, the work of his hand; the mighty power of that God that made the world is made over to you in the covenant of grace. See Jonah i. 9, 'I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which made the sea, and the dry land.' You have the creator to provide for you: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, 'All things are yours, for you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' Thou hast God himself, and he hath all creatures at his command and beck, and by possessing God, who is all in all, we possess all things. This will help us to enlarge our thoughts according to the extent of the covenant.

3. There are proper objects for God's several and special excellences. Because one creature could not represent the infinite perfection of God, therefore he hath multiplied them, and given to every one some special property, whereby he may be known and discovered. For instance, if you would meditate of God's purity and holiness among the creatures you must single out the light, which of all qualities is most pure; though it pass through the most impure places, it is not tainted; it is some resemblance of the holiness of God: 1 John i. 5, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' Look upon the sun, by that means you may the better consider the purity and holiness of God; the sun is but as the black and stutty bottom of a caldron in regard of God. So for God's immensity and greatness, pitch upon the vastness of the firmament, or the sea, or upon any other immense or great body. Of the vast magnitude and huge extension of the firmament, how many millions of miles do the stars take up in their tract and course? Astronomers reckon two hundred thirty-nine thousand miles; what is this to God? 1 Kings viii. 27, 'The heaven of heavens cannot contain him.' Isa. xl. 12, 'He hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span,' &c. The sun is reckoned to be a hundred and sixty-six times bigger than the earth; what is this to God? The psalmist speaks of the 'great and wide sea,' Ps. civ. 25. Man cannot think of such a vast body as the sea without some religious horror and dread of God: it represents to us the infiniteness of God. So for the power of God, think of his upholding the earth; there is the great instance of God's power, that so vast a weight as the body of the earth and waters is together should hang in the thin air, which of itself will not so much as sustain a tennis ball or feather, yet this is the only supporter of the earth and the waters; the immovable dwelling-place of all the living creatures is hung upon nothing but upon the air. Sometimes it is said that the earth is founded upon the waters, as Ps. xxiv. 2, 'He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods;' at other times, as Job xxvi. 7, 'He hangeth the earth upon nothing.' This great weight, it hangs merely upon the power of God, and therefore this discovers the greatness of the creator. So in bridling the sea, Job xxxvii. 10, 'The breadth of the waters is straitened.' God handles it as a nurse her babe, who turns and sways the child by the fire; so doth God with the sea: Job xxxviii. 8, 9, 'Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it.'

If you would meditate upon the faithfulness of God, you cannot have a better object than the constant course of the heavens and recourse of the seasons; they still remain as they were from the beginning of the world, and so they will continue: Ps. cxix. 90, 91, 'Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances; for all are thy servants.' Ps. lxxxii. 9, 'Thy faithfulness wilt thou establish in the very heavens;' that is, in the constant motions and courses of the stars in the heavens, God hath given the world a document of his truth and faithfulness. How many thousand years hath the sun kept his course without errors and alterations? So constant are the courses of the heavens, that astronomers are able for a great while before to tell when an eclipse shall be to an hour and minute. Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. 'Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun to be a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon, and of the stars, for a light by night; which divideth the sea, when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name: If these ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.' If you would think of the wisdom of God, then think upon the multitude of creatures that are in the world, yet they are all marshalled and guided in their order and course; such an innumerable company of creatures kept like a well-ordered army without any rout or confusion. Ps. cxlviii. 6, 'He hath established them for ever, he hath made a decree which shall not pass.' All the creatures, though so many, they keep their path and their course, and God wisely orders all for the service of the whole; and that discovers the wisdom of God. So for the unweariedness of his mercy and bounty; the stars go long journeys, yet are never tired, but continue their beneficent influences: Job xxxviii. 31, 'Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?' The sun riseth fresh every morning to communicate its influences; so the compassions of God come in fresh every morning: Lam. iii. 22, 23, 'It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not: they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.'

4. Above all things meditate much upon the heavens, and upon man. Upon the heavens, that you may know God; upon man, that you may know yourselves. The smallest things are of use and profit. Christ takes notice of the lilies of the field in Mat. vi. 28, 29, the beauty nature hath bestowed upon the lilies; 'so that Solomon in all his glory is not arrayed like one of them;' but now the heavens and man are the chiefest objects. The heavens are God's dwelling-place, and man is God's image; therefore here are the chiefest representations of the deity and godhead.

[1.] Look up to the heavens: there is God's royal house and pavilion, and a lively character of the divine perfections. Job and David were great students in the heavens: Ps. xix. 1, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork.' Some of the heathens made gods of the sun and stars for their glory and beauty. And indeed the Lord speaks to his own people, as if they were in danger, being such glorious bodies, and lively representations of the divine glory: Deut. iv. 19, 'Take heed, saith God, lest thou lift up thine eyes

to heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them, and serve them.' The sun is a representative of God, so the psalmist sets him out, Ps. xix. There is the omnipresence of the sun, ver. 6, 'His going out is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it.' The omniscieny and omni-efficiency of it, 'nothing is hid from the heat thereof;' the sun is *totus Oculus*, one broad eye that looks over all the world. So is God, 'all things are naked and open to him,' Heb. iv. 13; and his virtue reacheth to the smallest creatures. I have heard of a philosopher that would lie upon his back all the day, to look upon the beauty of the sun. Certainly we may stand gazing and admiring the heavens, and, oh, how many sweet thoughts might it occasion of the majesty of God, and the glory of the everlasting state! This is but the canopy, but the outward veil, and the covering of the beauty and glory that is within; it is but the outside of the heavenly palace where we shall reign with Christ for ever. There are some have gathered all divinity out of the heavens. There is but one heaven and one sun, to teach us there is but one God. The properties of heaven, motion, light and heat, are some kind of resemblance of the mysterious trinity. The vast extension of the heavens shows the infiniteness of God; the thinness of the air shows the spiritual essence of God; the incorruptibility of the heavens shows the immortality and immutability of God; the influences of the heavens discover the sweet emanations of the divine goodness; the order of heaven, God's wisdom; the brightness of heaven, the majesty of God; the purity of heaven, the holiness of God; the subtily and thinness of heaven, the simplicity of God; and the spheric form of the heaven discovers to us the eternity of God, without beginning and without end. The heavens are the natural catechism out of which you may read all points that are not mysterious, and do not depend merely upon revelation.

[2.] Think upon man. Man is not only the creature of God, but the image of God. One calls man the masterpiece of nature; it is good to consider ourselves; there is nothing nearer to ourselves than ourselves. Man, as he is the image of God, so he is the image of the world, the short draft and model of all the rest of the world. Look upon soul and body, all is full of wonders. In the body to consider the excellent symmetry and proportion of all the parts, how the joints and muscles are ordered for the service and beauty of the whole frame, the outward shape and the inward motion full of wonder. Oh, how excellent a painter is the creator, that can draw such an image out of the dust, and scarce two men alike in face! to see so many millions in the world, and everyone known from the other by some notable mark of difference in the face; yet the outward part is nothing to the inward parts. It is reported of Galen, that great physician, when he was cutting up a man, and saw the wise disposing of all the entrails, certainly, says he, He that made man doth not require the sacrifice of beasts, but only to admire his wisdom, goodness, and power. The psalmist saith: Ps. cxxxix. 14, 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' There is much of God in our very bodies. You will say, our bodies we have them from our parents; no, you shall see all we had from our parents was but a title to the first Adam's guilt and sin, and a pledge

of misery and of our everlasting unhappiness; we have nothing else. Our parents of themselves could not form such an excellent body; therefore not only the soul but the body is of God; they are but lower servants, God himself was the architect, the wise builder. If thy parents could form thy body, then they could tell how many muscles there are, and how they are placed in the body, how many veins and sinews, how many bones greater and lesser; but they know not, it is a thing of chance to their work, therefore it is the exact composure of God. Besides, if thy parents could make thy body, then they could repair it when it is wounded, and restore it when sick. He that makes a watch can mend it when it is broken and discomposed. It is God alone that made it. Then for the soul, there is the chief part of man. There is nothing nearer to God than the soul but only the angels, therefore we can hardly know him by the creature without considering our own souls. This leaves man without excuse; he had a rational soul to know his creator. Thy soul is a spirit as God is, in the same rank of being. The sun is not a spirit. Those glorious bodies that shine in the heavens, they are not advanced to the nobleness with thy soul. Then thy soul is invisible as God is; you may as well deny your own soul as deny God is because he cannot be seen. Thy soul is immortal and incorruptible, as God is. In the very essence of thy soul there is much of God to be seen, in the operations of the soul, it is in every part of the body; *tota in toto, et tota in qualibet parte*; all in all parts, and all in the whole; so God fills all the world, for he is everywhere, and yet nowhere in a sense. When a member is withered or cut off, the soul suffers no loss: so the Lord in all the changes of the world suffers nothing: sometimes he lets out his goodness in the creature, and sometimes the creature is destroyed, yet there is no alteration in God. And then who can trace the several traverses and flights of reason? The soul cannot only hear, see, smell, and taste, but it can discourse also of things invisible, the essence of God and angels. If there were nothing to discover God in your souls, and the impressions of God upon your souls, yet the several arts and crafts that are abroad in the world, (these inventions are common, therefore less observed), how could these things be found out? they display the wisdom of God. For to instance in common things: in the craft of husbandry, who doth not admire to see the various inventions in husbandry and gardening, in ordering the corn and fruits of the earth, Isa. xxviii. from ver. 24 to the end? He concludes all, ver. 29, 'This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts.' And so for the smith's craft: Isa. liv. 16, 'I have created the smith that bloweth the coals,' &c. It is God that teacheth to cast iron into various shapes and figures. The inventors of arts among the heathens they counted gods. It is God teacheth men curious inventions. It is true, other creatures have their arts, but nothing like man. The birds curiously build their nests, the foxes dig their holes, and the little spider can make a curious web to catch flies, but they do these things by instinct of nature, and therefore do them always in one and the same manner; but the arts of man are various and innumerable. Nothing can escape that which the wit of man cannot take, neither birds by their flight, nor beasts with their greatness, nor fishes in the depth of the water: James iii. 7,

‘For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind.’ Man is able to tame all beasts, to bring them to his own use and purpose; but God made them. In the art of navigation consider the wonders of the Lord; that such great vast burdens should dance upon the tops of the water, that ships should as it were fly with sails as with wings, and run with oars as with feet. And then in painting and architecture much of the wisdom of God is seen. Oh, consider and use this as an argument to set out the glory of God. Man can build houses, but God built heaven and earth. The painter is able to paint with colours; but admire him that could paint so fairly that had no other pencil but his hand, and no other paint but a little dirt.

5. You must not only consider what is made, but to what end. In the works themselves we may consider God’s power and wisdom; but in the end we may consider God’s goodness, and our own duty. Now the ends of the creation were many, chiefly these three; man’s good, the creator’s praise, the glory of Jesus Christ.

[1.] When thou art thinking of the creation, consider, all this was made for man’s good. The whole world is but the great house and palace of little man. Oh, how great is the goodness of God to sorry man! whole nature is but his servant. The angels were made for man: Heb. i. 14, ‘Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?’ Those courtiers of heaven, those masterpieces of the creation are man’s servants. The stars were made to give us light and heat, to cherish man and to cherish the earth; and the waters were made for man’s good. The whole earth is but man’s garden; the plants of it for our use for meat and medicine; the beasts for our food and clothing; nay in the bowels of the earth there are laid up veins of treasure to maintain commerce between nation and nation; though men be scattered in the several climates of the world, yet God will bring them together by traffic. Nay, all sublunary things were not only created for man’s use, but most of them subjected to man’s dominion. See the charter, all is made over to us: Gen. i. 28, 29, ‘Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.’ They all serve for the uses of man, and are made over to him. It is true, the heavens are for the use of man, but they are not under the dominion of man; that is reserved to God alone; therefore it is said: Ps. cxv. 16, ‘The heaven even the heavens are the Lord’s, but the earth he hath given to the children of men.’ But though the heavens be the Lord’s, that is, reserved in his power, yet they serve for the use of man. The air serves to give man breath; the firmament serves to give man light and heat; and the heaven of heavens serves for his eternal and blessed habitation. Oh, the goodness of God to man! ‘Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him!’ How may we break out into such a holy wonder and admiration!

[2.] They were made for God’s glory: Rom. xi. 36, ‘All things,’ saith the apostle, ‘are of him, and through him, and to him:’ ‘of him’

in creation; 'through him' in the sustentation of his providence; and 'to him,' that is, for the uses and purposes of his glory; all things return to the womb of their original, out of which they once came. The Lord deals with us just as Potiphar dealt with Joseph, he gave him power over all things, but only his wife, that he kept to himself; therefore by way of meditation we may reason as Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 8, 9, 'Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house: and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I, neither hath he kept any thing back from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' So do you reason with yourself; Oh, I have a bounteous creator, God hath given me all things, for my use and comfort, and all the articles of the lease and grant are only that I should serve his glory! Oh, let me not rob him of that; let me enjoy the creature, but give God the glory; let me not pervert the end of my creation; all should be to his praise. All the creatures do as it were proclaim to us, Man! glorify thy creator; God hath given us to thee to serve thee, that thou mightest serve him; we die for thy good and support, that thou mayest live; we are ready to fall down and perish for thy food. Oh, therefore be thou contented to suffer any inconvenience, if it be the loss of life, that the glory of God may live. We will give thee food, meat, nourishment, all that thou requirest, if thou wouldest love him, and praise him, and live to the glory of God. Saith the sun, I will give thee light and continued influences and rays every morning, if thou wilt but glorify thy creator. It is said: Prov. xvi. 4, 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' In a sort we may say, God made all things for man, and man for himself; it follows, 'and the wicked for the day of evil.'

[3.] Therefore doth he create the world to make a fair way for Jesus Christ, Col. i. 15. The apostle proves the godhead of Christ by this argument: 'He is the firstborn of every creature: for by him all things were created, that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him.' Creation is but one step to the execution and advancement of God's decrees. We were first made that we might afterwards be redeemed. Christ gave us our lives at first, and afterwards he saved our lives. First he created us, and then prevented our execution. The world was but one step to heaven. First he gives thee thyself, then all things in the world, then he would give thee himself. The angels were made ministering spirits, and the Son of God was made a servant for thy sake. Oh, the wonderful love of God! When he founded the world, then he prepared heaven for thee that art a member of Christ. All was in a subordination to his wise decrees.

6. We should specially meditate upon the goodness and beneficence of God. When we taste the sweetness of the creatures, then is a special time of devising arguments of praise and studying thanks. It is said, Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' Mark, this was God's testimony to the gentiles; this preached God to them. Oh, therefore lift

up a solemn thought on these occasions. In the spring-time, when nature is in its pride, think who it is that milketh out the fruits of the earth, that ripeneth the apples on the tree, that seasons the grass, and makes it fit for food for the beasts. Or else when you have had any liberal or comfortable use of the creature, then the heart should be raised up to God. Usually when God remembers us most, and we abound in creature comforts, we forget God and slight the creator. Oh! remember this is to despise God in the day of his magnificence. Look, as when Vashti refused to come, when the king was minded to show himself to his nobles, it is said, Esther i. 12, 'The king was very wroth, and his anger burned in him;' so here, the lord sends to invite thy soul to come to him in the spring-time, in the time of gladness of heart; when you abound in comforts, he sends these messengers that thou mightest come and solace thyself with him. Should we not come then, his anger would be raised; especially when we abuse the creatures to riot, and our abundance to vanity and excess; consider what an injury this is to God, to abuse that which he hath made. If we have made any thing, and another come and scorn and abuse it, it enrageth us: consider what it is to abuse the workmanship of God.

SERMON IX.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear—HEB. xi. 3.

7. COME not off from any meditation, till you have found some sensible profit. I will show you what are the usual fruits of solemn and serious thoughts of the creation. If your thoughts be serious, thus it will be:—

[1.] There will be a greater disposition and aptness to praise the Lord. If you have meditated aright the heart will be more affected with the lustre of his glory shining forth in the creature: Rev. iv. 11, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' Cold and dead thoughts vanish without use and profit. When you think of the creation aright, there will be found in you dispositions to praise God that he should devise all this for man. Who can touch the harp of the creatures without being ravished with the music? who can read that book that is framed with such excellent art, and not commend the author? who can hear the creatures preach a sermon, and not say, Blessed be the God that made them?

[2.] The soul will be raised into some wonder and admiration at the goodness and wisdom of God. Pythagoras boasted he had gotten this advantage by philosophy, *Nihil admirari*, to wonder at nothing; but certainly when we survey the works of God, we cannot choose but wonder at all things. This is the least respect you owe God to wonder at

his works; and till your hearts be thus heightened, your thoughts have not been ponderous and serious, nor sufficiently exercised. It is very observable the children of God never come off from the meditation of his works without admiration: Ps. viii. 3, 4, 'When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon, and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him! and the son of man that thou visitest him!' So Ps. civ. 24, there is another meditation of the creation, and see how he concludes: 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.' We are apt to wonder at the workmanship of man; at a curious picture, or at a building fairly contrived, we wonder at the skill and art of the workman. Certainly you set God much below a painter and a carver, when you can look upon this goodly frame of the world, and never wonder at it. Consider, you never rightly glorify and praise him till there be admiration. Admiration is that operation of the understanding by which it is carried out to objects above its reach and perception. Wonder seizeth upon you either by new things, or by miraculous things. You cannot tell how to comprehend strange things, they do for a while suspend the act; but things that are wonderful indeed, and which after contemplation and search we cannot apprehend and find out to their perfection, they wholly astonish and overwhelm the faculty. Now such are the works of the Lord; upon an intimate contemplation of them we shall find them above the reach of our understanding, and we can only say, 'O Lord how wonderful are thy works!' Till there be this admiration, the affections are not proportionably lifted up to the object. There is no object within the whole circumference of nature but, so far as we discern God in it, will raise our wonder.

[3.] If you meditate aright, the heart will be more drawn off from the creature to God. This is the main end either of making the creature, or of meditating upon the creature. Of making the creature: Acts xvii. 26, 27, 'He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek after the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him.' We are apt to stay in the creature, and forget the creator; this is quite contrary to the end of God, they are to show us how good and how sweet the Lord is. This was the reason why God made the world, and filled it with inhabitants, that the world might wonder at him; but we doat upon shadows, and leave the substance. This is as if a mighty emperor should gather all his nobles together, that they might come and admire his royalty; and when they come, they turn their back and admire his picture and shadow. Consider, all the creatures are but rude adumbrations or shadows of the glory of God, to help the memory; but they must not intercept the affection, and forestall the heart. Should we be so foolish as go to the shadows, those obscure resemblances, and leave the creature that is so full of majesty and glory? Would we be contented with a painted horse for our use, or painted bread for our food? Why are we then contented with those shadows of God? Meditation is nothing but a parley and discourse with the creature about the chiefest good. Job makes hue and cry after wisdom, Where

is the chiefest good? Is it in the earth? no, that is too gross. Is it in heaven? no, the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. Is it in the depth? no, he is a greater depth than can be fathomed. What is the husk of the creature to the bread of eternal life? what are the drossy shadows and obscure resemblances to God, who is the substance himself?

[4.] If you have rightly meditated upon the works of creation, there will be more fear and dread of God, that will arise from the consideration of his majesty and power impressed upon the creature. When we look upon God in his works we see him in his royalty, therefore there must needs be a great deal of fear upon the heart: Jer. v. 22, 'Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?' Mark, he calls for fear, because he hath made the creature, and hath ordered all things with such exact wisdom. Who can think of the dreadful waves that are bound up by God, and not have some horror upon his heart? They that do not thus discourse upon his works, God saith, they are brutish: ver. 24, 'And say not in their hearts, Let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth rain, both the former and latter in its season.' Oh, when we come to take abroad God's greatness and excellency, how can we but dread and reverence him?

[5.] If you meditate rightly upon the workmanship of God, there will be more love to God for all his kindness, and for all those effusions and communications of his goodness to the creature. Here we come to see how much we are bound to God. Usually we are far more affected with what man doth for us, than with what God doth for us; as, for instance, we love him that helps us and delivers us out of straits; but we do not love him that made us out of nothing; this seems nothing to us. Every petty courtesy obligeth us to men, and we do not consider we owe all to God, life, breath, and being, and all. If man should do half so much for us, how are we obliged to him? God hath done incomparably more, and we do not esteem it. What is the reason? is it this, man's courtesy seems more, because his abilities are less? or is it because he gives from himself? how poor is this! Doth water lose its nature, because it is in the sea, and not in the bucket and cistern? Are God's benefits the worse because he is the author, whose nature it is to do good? Consider, waters are sweeter in the fountain than in the rivers. There is more condescension in God than in man. When man loves us, he does but love his equal, and draws out his bowels to his own flesh, Isa. lviii. 7. Consider, the earth is full of the riches of his goodness, therefore love the creator.

Another fruit of meditating upon the works of God will be obedience. Oh, what an interest hath God in you by making you out of nothing! what a title hath he to your heart! If the husbandman counts that tree his own which he hath planted; or the carver that image his own which he has made; certainly thou art God's, and he may call thee his own, who hath made thee out of nothing. There is a difference between making out of nothing, and making out of something. Men

cannot make any piece of workmanship, but they must have matter to work upon; but the Lord made thee out of nothing, therefore certainly thou art his; and therefore the right and dominion of God must be infinitely greater than that of man; and what a right hath God by his providence! Thou hast a right in thy servant, who hath his well-being from thee, and therefore surely God hath a right to thee, who by his providence supplies thee with all things thou wantest.

[7.] Meditation on the creature will beget trust and dependence on God; this is the main thing that God aimeth at, that we be drawn to trust in God, when we think of the creature. The heathens knew much of God in the general, they were able to discourse of his eternal power and godhead; but when they came to draw practical inferences, how they should trust in him, then 'they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened,' Rom. i. 20, 21. When we consider the great effect of his mighty power, and yet do not trust in the Lord, these are but vain imaginations. The chief thing in meditation on the creation is, that you should come away with the greater trust, for in the creation there are all arguments of trust. There you learn the freeness of God's grace, when God made all things out of nothing, certainly the creature could merit nothing; and there you learn the exactness of his care, because in his wise decrees he had a care of thee when thou wert not, therefore he will have a care of thee when thou art: Ps. cxlv. 15, 'The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season;' therefore he will supply man. And so then you learn the greatness of his power: and that is the reason of the apostle's expression: 1 Peter iv. 19, 'Commit your souls unto God as unto a faithful creator.' Thence doth the quiet rest and establishment of spirit arise: he is able to raise means, to create deliverances, to supply all your wants, and relieve you in all your distresses.

Doct. 2. We understand the truth and wonders of the creation by faith, and not by reason.

Take these propositions to clear the point—

1. There are three sorts of lights which God hath bestowed upon men; the light of nature, the light of grace, and the light of glory. These are like the three several lights God hath set up in the firmament, the sun, the moon, and the lesser stars. There is the daylight of glory, which is the sun when it arises in its strength and brightness; and there is the light of faith, which is like the moon, a light which shines in a dark place: then there is the weak and feeble ray of reason, which is like the light of the lesser stars. By the first light, we see God as he is in himself; by the second, God as he hath discovered himself in the word; by the third, God as he is seen in the creature. By the light of glory we behold God in himself, 'we see him face to face,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The expression is used in opposition to the veil of the shadows of the law: here we can only behold God as he is veiled under words of corporeal and sensible significations; but there 'we shall see him as he is,' 1 John iii. 2. By the second light we see God as he is pleased to reveal himself in his word: and by the light of reason we see God in his works, as he hath displayed his glory in the whole frame of the

world : so that there is vision, faith and reason. The one is the fruit of our glorification, and the other of our redemption, and the last of our creation.

2. In this world reason had been enough, if man had continued in his innocency. His mind then was his only bible, and his heart his only law and rule ; but he tasted of the tree of knowledge and hereby he and we got nothing but ignorance. It is true, there are some relics of reason left for human uses, and to leave us without excuse ; therefore it is said, John i. 9, ‘ That Christ is the true light, which enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world.’ It is by his grant that a little reason is continued to us. But now in matters of religion, we had need of external and foreign helps. Man left to himself would only grope after God. In many things reason is altogether blind ; in other things the light of it is very faint, weak and ineffectual. This is the sad state of man since the fall, his reason is blind ; and that not only out of weakness, but out of prejudice ; there is not only darkness in our mind, but there is pride and malice too, by which we are set against the truths of the word.

3. The only remedy and cure for this is faith, and external revelation from God. The blindness of reason is cured by the word ; the pride of reason is cured by the grace of faith. Revelation supplies the defect of it ; and faith takes down the pride of it, and captivates the thoughts into the obedience of the truths represented in the word ; so that reason now cannot be a judge ; at best it is but a handmaid to faith. And though the mysteries of religion transcend reason, yet that is not an argument of the falsity of the word, but of the imbecility and weakness of our own reason : and those mysteries, which we cannot comprehend, do but put us in mind of the sad consequences of the fall of man.

4. The doctrine of the creation is a mixed principle ; much of it is liable to reason, but most of it can only be discovered by faith. We must consider the creation two ways, either *ex parte rei*, or *ex parte modi* ; either the thing itself, or the necessary circumstances. For the thing itself, that was known to the heathens, that there was a creation ; but the manner how was wholly hidden from reason, and can only be supplied by revelation of the word. Nature doth confess a creation, but faith must teach us what it is.

More distinctly I shall lay down my sense in these further propositions—

[1.] By the light of nature it may be known that there was a creation. It may be proved by evident reason that there was a first cause, from whence all propagation begins ; otherwise we shall be left to a perpetual wandering, and shall not know out of what womb all things that are in the world issued forth. Plutarch propounds the question ; whether the hen were before the egg, or the egg before the hen ? Look upon all creatures ; is the acorn before the oak, or the oak before the acorn ? the spawn before the fish or the fish before the spawn ? therefore at first there must be fishes created, and there must be oaks created. To this purpose the apostle quoteth Aratus, Acts xvii. 28, *τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένοι ἔσμεν*, for we are his offering.

[2.] The heathens discovered that there was also a first mover, a

first cause of all things in the world. Aristotle, though he held the eternity of the world, confesseth there was *πρώταν αἰτίαν κόσμου καὶ τῆς τάξεως πάσης*; and he saith that Homotimus and Anaxagoras were necessitated by the appearance of the truth to acknowledge it; and that all perfections which are in other things by participation, are in the first cause essentially; and that this first cause was of such infinite power and wisdom, as appeared, because all things are ordered to such good uses and purposes. The apostle saith, Rom. i. 19, 20, 'That which may be known of God is manifest in them: for God hath showed it unto them. 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.' And he disputes upon it as a granted principle, that there was a first cause: Acts xvii. 28, 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being;' and Acts xiv. 15, 'He is the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.'

[3.] This knowledge in the heathens was but faint, and full of hesitancy and confusion, of very little profit and comfort. Though they did acknowledge a God and first cause, yet they multiplied feigned deities and set up many gods; they had not any full and saving light, which might be a comfort and profit to their souls; they could not see this first cause, so as to fear him, and trust in him for his power, love him for his goodness, and honour him and adore him for his wisdom: Rom. i. 21, 22, 'They become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.' They could not draw out the necessary consequences of these truths, to love, trust, fear, worship, and honour this first cause; there they were vain in their imaginations. Therefore our Lord proposeth the gentiles as a pattern of unbelievers: Mat. vi. 32, 'After all these things do the gentiles seek,' when he spoke how we should trust God. They had but rude and imperfect notions of the power and care of God, and could not apply them for their profit and benefit, therefore they are carking and caring, and cannot trust God.

[4.] The manner and the necessary circumstances of the creation were wholly unknown to the heathens. Effects discover the cause, but they cannot discover the circumstances of action, because those depend wholly upon the will of the agent. So because the circumstances of the creation were not necessary, but did wholly depend upon the will of God, reason and nature cannot know them, unless God make them known in the word; as, for instance, they knew not perfectly who made the world; not when, nor how it was made, nor whence it was made. Not who made the world: though they had some rude and gross conceits of the first cause, yet they looked upon him as a servile agent, working out of mere necessity, communicating his influences, because he could not choose to do otherwise. So when the world was made, the beginning and duration of it, this was wholly hidden from the heathens. The scripture can only show it to us. Therefore many of the heathens complained of the great defect that was in their chronicles, that they had not an ancienter monument than the destruction of Troy; *Cur supra bellum Trojanum, et funera Trojæ*; so Lucretius, Macrobius. The writings of Moses are much more ancient

than all the gods of the heathens. The wars of Troy were about the time of the judges. The youngest prophets of the old testament were before the oldest philosophers and historians of the gentiles. Then they knew not whence, from what term, God should begin his work. This is a maxim of nature, *ex nihilo nihil fit*—that nothing can be made, out of nothing; therefore this puzzled them how the creature should be first made, since it was contrary to that natural maxim, that the whole world should be framed out of nothing, and that by the mere word of God; this never sunk into the heads of the wisest heathens. Hence proceeded such difference of opinions among them; some held the world to be a work of mere chance, as Epicurus and Leucippus; others, that it was eternal and coeval with the first cause, as Aristotle; and the Platonists, that it was made out of some eternal pre-existent matter. Then they could not tell how it was made in six days; nature, reason, and discourse could never have found out that, which Moses hath written concerning the distinct originals of all propagation, and the framing of every creature in its rank and place; they could see such things, but not the original of the fowls, of fishes, of man, and of all the beasts of the field. Nature could propound questions, how were these made? but nature could never assail them. Then they could not tell the end why the world was made. Aristotle saith, We are not at all bound to the first cause, whether he did good or evil, because he did work out of servile necessity, and could do no otherwise. Moses tells us, God made all things for his glory, that he may be worshipped, and honoured, and served by the creature; that the highest heaven was a place for man; that the soul might enjoy bliss and eternal communion with God. All these circumstances were hidden from them; they were not matters of sense, they were not before our eyes: but faith makes us to apprehend the six days' works, as if we had seen and stood by, as the angels did, applauding every day's work. They were not matters of reason, because transcending those principles that are agreeable to the rules of nature; and they depend merely on the unlimitedness of God's will, and the exuberancy of his power.

Use 1. For information. If by faith only we can understand the truth and wonders of the creation, then,

1. It informs us, that reason is not the judge of controversies in religion, and the doubts that do arise about the matters of God are not to be determined by the dictates of nature. If then we leave the written word and follow the guidance of our own reason, we shall but puzzle ourselves with impertinent scruples, and leave ourselves under a dissatisfaction. Usually men of parts and ingenuous education are liable to this snare; for having the highest claim to the exercise of reason, they are apt to set up reason above the word. Celsus said to his fellow heathens, that we should follow reason, and that all error was brought into the world by faith. And Galen, when he read some passages of Moses, said, *Multa dicit, nihil probat*—he saith much, but he proves nothing. In many things we have only the saying of scripture, and it is enough the scripture saith it. If we should believe no more than the strength of reason and discourse will assure us, we should soon deny the doctrine of the trinity, the deity of Christ, and the creation; reason can never trace these things. This is the inlet of all

atheism and profaneness, when men set up reason as the highest tribunal. Indeed there are many uses of reason; partly to prepare and induce us to hearken to the word of God; this is the mind God hath given us to know him, the stock left in nature, upon which he would implant faith. And partly, it is of great use, that after we have believed, we may receive an additional confirmation; when we believe a thing, reason may judge, if it be not equal and fit we should believe it. Faith makes advantage of the confessions and acknowledgments of nature: there is no truth we believe, but afterwards we may find excellent advantages to confirm us in it by rational searches. These confirmations of reason are of great use for the quenching those fiery darts which Satan flings into the soul, by which he would bear down all principles of religion. And partly, to prevent absurd intrusions upon our belief and fanatical opinions. Ignorance and error have many times been veiled under a pretence of mystery, and things hidden from reason. Though reason must be captivated to faith, yet not to fancy. Reason is made a judge many times where the word is silent; but for the truths revealed in the word, though they are above reason, yet they are not against reason; though reason cannot comprehend them, yet they are not repugnant to reason. And partly reason is of great use, that we may search the scripture, and draw out necessary consequences from the truths revealed in the word; this we may do by the warrant of Christ. The mysteries of salvation must be believed first, that we may understand them; we must receive them from God's bare testimony, afterwards search them out, that our belief may be the more distinct and explicit. Thus reason serveth faith. There is a great use of reason in religion, so it keeps its place, being subordinate to faith.

2. It informs us that the heathens had never light enough for salvation. Their charity is too large who think that the heathens may be taught enough by those natural apostles, sun, moon, and stars. Certainly they are blind in the work of redemption, since they are so blind in the work of creation. Though God hath not left himself without witness, Act xiv. 17, that is, such as may lead them to God the creator, yet not to lead them to God the Redeemer, there is enough given to the heathens for conviction, but not for conversion. Therefore all those that God would call to himself, he gave them a higher light, even the revelation of the word. Though nature tells us, there is a God, yet what he is, and how to be worshipped, and how he came to be displeased with the world, and how he came to be reconciled, of all this it telleth us nothing. Nature finds itself depraved, but it knows not the remedy and cure.

3. It shows us the great advantage that we have by faith, and by the written word. If we had been left to the puzzle and distraction of our own reason, how should we have known whence the world came, and how it was made by God? Reason, as it exerciseth itself in several ways since the ruin of it in Adam's fall, is of several dimensions, according to men's natural constitution, moral education, and industry. But he hath given us the blessed rules of his word. What a puzzle and distraction were the philosophers left in? A poor child learneth more by a catechism, than all the philosophers by their profound

researches ; those that have the smallest abilities of reason may here learn. The philosophers, though they spent all their days in painful studies, and were endowed with rare abilities of learning, yet what novices were they in spiritual things ! they cannot tell what the happiness of the soul is, nor where it shall be enjoyed, nor the means to attain it ; they know not how the world was made, nor how it shall end.

4. It informs us, that religion is not illiterate. Grace doth not make men simple, but rather perfects human learning. None discern truths with more comfort and satisfaction than a believer ; it solves all doubts and riddles of reason. *Quod ratio non capit, fides intelligit.* Simple men despise learning, and carnal men despise grace, both on the same grounds. Faith and reason must go together, though reason must be subordinate. We should not despise the help of human learning, neither should we despise grace, as if it did make men dull, and blunt the edge of their parts. Reason and faith, when kept in their proper place, are of excellent advantage. Join faith with your study, and all will be more clear, otherwise we shall stumble at truths. When these three lights are in conjunction, the light of parts, the light of refined reason and the light of grace, they bring forth admirable and happy effects. But on the other side, the decay of learning hath been the sensible abatement of religion. Religion hath never lost more than when outward helps have been despised, which men do to hide their own ignorance. When the apostle speaks against the vain abuse of learning, he gives God thanks : 1 Cor. xiv. 18, 'I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all,' implying that it is the usual course of men to speak against that which they want. A heated iron pierceth into a board though blunt, more than edged tools when cold. Holiness and outward advantages must go together.

5. We learn hence the properties of faith to have knowledge, assent, and obedience in it ; therefore it is not a blind reliance, but a clear, distinct persuasion of such truths, concerning which human discourse can give us no satisfaction. Faith is opposite to three things. The knowledge of it is opposite to ignorance ; faith brings the soul to the understanding of the things of salvation. And it is opposite to folly ; it makes us improve the mysteries of salvation to our spiritual comfort : Luke xxiv. 25, 'O ye fools, and slow of heart to believe ;' and Eph. i. 18, 'That the eyes of your understanding being enlightened,' &c. There is the wisdom of believers to apply truths to their spiritual advantage. And it is opposite to incogitancy and carelessness of spirit, it makes us turn our minds upon the things of religion.

6. It is the nature of faith to subscribe to a revelation in the word, though reason give little assistance and aid. The word is enough to faith, though the thing seem unlikely to reason ; it stands not upon appearance or probabilities. When we have a doctrine laid down in the word, we must not mind whether it be probable, otherwise we should never believe a creation, which is the making of all things out of nothing.

Use 2. It serves to stir you up to act faith. What is the use of faith upon the creation ? To answer all the objections of reason, and settle the truth in the soul, and to improve it for spiritual uses and

advantages, and to facilitate the belief of other truths upon this ground; did he make the world out of nothing? Many truths are less wonderful than this.

SERMON X.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear—HEB. xi. 3.

Now I come to consider the circumstances of the creation; and the first is, 'that the worlds were made,' or framed. In the original, it is, *κατηρτίσθαι*, 'set in joint,' a metaphor taken from the perfect frame of man's body, where every member, vein and artery is aptly disposed, and in its proper place; so are all creatures settled in their due proportion and order; there is nothing wanting either for use, or for ornament; it is all fitly framed and made up into a complete mass and body. The note is this, viz.

Doct. That the world was framed in an accurate, orderly, and perfect manner.

1. I shall illustrate the point by some similitudes out of scripture.

2. I shall show wherein the harmony and perfect order of the creation did consist.

3. I shall answer a doubt that may be commenced against the doctrine.

First, To illustrate the note by some similitudes out of scripture. The perfection and order of the world is compared to man's body, to a host or army, and to a house or excellently contrived building.

1. It is compared to the body of a man. The world is set in joint, and there is a great deal of likeness and similitude: 1 Cor. xii. 12, 'As the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of that one body being many, are one body;' that is, though they be of different shape and different uses, yet they all make up but one body. So the several ingredients into this great mass and lump are for the matter, worth, and influence of a diverse nature; yet all these members and pieces of the creation are tied to one another by secret bands and ligaments, as the members of the body are; such a confederacy and compliance is there between all the parts of the world, they fall into one common frame as several joints, by a mutual agreement and proportion.

2. It is compared to an host or army: Gen. ii. 1, 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them;' Ps. xxxiii. 6, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them, by the breath of his mouth; he gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap, and he layeth up the depth in storehouses.' Therefore God is called the Lord of hosts upon this reason, because the creatures were not huddled together in confusion, but stand like soldiers in their orderly rank, as a well-marshalled host under the

conduct of God. This word *host* doth not only imply their services and operations under God's command and conduct, but their order and government. The Septuagint render it by *κόσμος*, to signify the beauty of it. All the parts of the creation are like a well-ordered army standing in rank and file, the places of their abode as so many tents. And God hath his magazine and treasury out of which he doth supply them : Job xxxviii. 22, 23, 'Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?'

3. It is compared to a curious house. The universe hath an excellent resemblance to a frame of building, Job xxxviii. 4-6. There you have this notion, where we are told of laying the foundation, and the corner-stone, and of a line, and measure, and the like; all figurative terms which are taken from an outward building. The whole world is but one great house; the earth is the floor, the sea is the watercourse for it; heaven is the arch and roof of it; God is the architect of this house, but man is the inhabitant and tenant. And lest he should want comfort, the sun and stars are like so many windows to let in light, all to set forth the glory and magnificence of God. There are several rooms and chambers in this house; therefore the prophet speaks, Amos ix. 6, 'He buildeth his stories in the heaven.' The earth by its own proper weight remains unmovable in the centre of the world, and the spheres one above another are as so many stories in a house.

Secondly, Wherein this order and beauty of the world doth consist. It stands in six things.

1. In the wonderful multitude and variety of creatures, distributed into so many several excellent natures and forms, they all do proclaim the beauty and order of the whole world. It is no difficult thing with one seal to make many impressions of the same stamp, or to print many sheets with the same letters when once set; but that God should diversify forms, and that in such an infinite manner, that he should leave such different impressions from the seal of his power, according to the platform of his own counsel, this can never sufficiently enough be admired; herbs, plants, flowers, fruits, birds, beasts; and among living creatures there is a great deal of difference in figure, taste, colour, and smell; then such variety of living creatures; among men, men's faces though they were all drawn by the same pencil, yet what difference is there! Scarce two men alike among so many millions. The stars the apostle saith, 'one differs from another in glory,' 1 Cor. xv. 41. The angels are above them, and there is a great deal of difference among angels; some are thrones, some dominions, some powers, some principalities, as the apostle reckons them up, Col. i. 16. So that when we consider this, the wonderful diversity of forms, we may cry out, Ps. civ. 24, 'Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.' The world would not have been so beautiful, if all had been great, none small; if all hot, no creature cold; all moist, no dry; or all dry, and no moist; as the frame of men's bodies would not have been half so beautiful, if all were eye, or all head, or all heart, or all brain; or, as in outward things, are all not rulers and captains,

but there is a difference. This speaks the beauty and excellency of the world, the variety of God's works.

2. The beauty and artificial composition of all things. Human wit cannot reach it; whether we respect the outward shape or inward frame, look upon man; 'He is fearfully and wonderfully made,' saith the psalmist, Ps. cxxxix. 14. The beauty of women overcomes, besots, and takes away the heart of wise men, it is so great; nothing can be added or taken away from any creature, but there will be deformity and ugliness. Do but take away an eye from a man; or add a mouth to him; how deformed would it be, to see a man with one eye, or two mouths! Nay, look upon the baser creatures, those that seem to be the most uncomely parts of the creation, yet there is a beauty in their make and frame. A man would look upon a swine as a filthy creature, yet to see a swine without ears, how uncomely! Nay, go to lower things; God hath showed his power in great things, but his wisdom in small. In a gnat, in a grain of mustard seed, how much of God may be seen! What virtue is there in that small seed to grow up into a tree! Certainly, nature is nowhere seen so much as in the least things. Christ sendeth us to the lilies of the field, Mat. vi. 29. What curious drafts are there in the flowers of the field! Solomon sends us to the ant. So we may go to a gnat; to see such a little creature to have feet, head, and heart, all the inward senses, and all the outward senses, all necessary sagacity for its own preservation; how wonderfully are these little creatures made! But now look to man's inward frame, there is more, all full of riddle. Galen, when he was dissecting the hand of man, he fell into a great admiration of that God that made man. It is wonderful to consider the continual motion that is in man's body, and that without alteration. Men have laboured much to make a clock that should run by the force of a weight for four and twenty hours. Oh, how great is the wisdom of God, and the power of God that made man! So that there is a clock that still strikes within him from his birth till he comes to die, and be no more in the world—that the nutritive power should be working perpetually without intermission, that there should be a continual beating of the pulses, that the lungs and arteries should move without ceasing to seventy or ninety years, nay, before the flood, nine hundred years. All the creatures are curiously and wonderfully made and framed.

3. The order and beauty of the world consists as in their composition, so in their disposition, and in the apt placing of all things. When we look upon every creature, we shall see it could not have a better place than God hath bestowed upon it; the superior and inferior bodies are all exactly ordered. The earth, of all bodies the most heavy and ponderous, is lowest, and the foundation of all the rest. The elements as they are more pure and simple, so they have an upper place—the waters above the earth, and the air above the waters. Then the stars, which are most pure and simple, they have the uppermost places of the world; and the sun, as king and prince, placed in the middle of the stars. So that the air and water, which are of a middle purity, are like so many couples and loops which tie heaven and earth together, and they are between them both. The air conveys the influences of the stars to the earth, and preventeth emptiness and vacuity.

The water that is more impure, though not altogether so gross a body as the earth, insinuates itself with the earth, and makes it fruitful. Living creatures, because they are made up of elements, they are placed in them, some in the air, some upon the earth, some in the water, that so from above and beneath they may receive comfort and profit; heat and comfort from above, and food from beneath. Then they are exquisitely and accurately placed: creatures that are hugest and of the greatest multitude are put into the sea, Leviathan is to sport there, lest if they should be upon earth, they might be an annoyance to man, and cause too great a waste of food. And therefore the reasonable creatures, they are in the highest and lowest parts of the world; the angels in the highest heavens, and man upon earth; because in both ends of the world God would have some to behold his glory, and to contemplate the whole frame. In short, the earth, the dwelling-place of man, standeth fixed and unmoved. The sea rolls up and down to keep it pure and fresh; the heavens move to convey their influences; the clouds are carried hither and thither, God rides up and down upon them, as princes in their chariots: Isa. xix. 1, 'The Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt;' Ps. xviii. 10, 'And he rode upon a cherub and did fly, yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind;' that so the earth might receive due moisture for the use of man. Then the distribution of the waters into all the parts of the earth, as it were by pipes, conveyances, and channels, prepared on purpose, that all the creatures may have drink and refreshment. The psalmist takes notice of that, Ps. civ. 10, 11, 'He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field, the wild asses quench their thirst; he watereth the hills from his chambers.'

4. This accurate frame is seen in the wonderful consent of all the parts of the world, and the proportion they bear one to another. There are several steps and degrees in the creature, by which we may go higher and higher, and climb up till we come to God himself. The proportion of the creatures leads us up to God. As to instance, in the general rank and kind of all things in the world, the lowest creatures have only being; others have not only being, but life, as plants; others have not only life, but feeling and sense, as beasts; others have not only life and sense, but reason and understanding, as men. But now man is in a lower sphere of understanding, he receives objects by his senses, and he needs his fancy, therefore there is a higher sphere of understanding creatures, even angels, and they have a higher manner of reason and understanding than man. So above the angels, there is a God. Nature climbs step by step, and leads us to God. A stone hath being, but not life. A plant grows, but feels not as a beast. A beast hath sense, but cannot discourse and reason as a man; and sense is more imperfect, than reason, because it must have a corporeal organ or instrument. Man's reason is lower than angels, because man, in all the discourses and traverses of his mind, needs the help and ministry of imagination and fancy, which angels need not. But now an angel is lower than God, but yet higher than man, he doth not need the outward species and shapes of things to be received by the senses, but the understanding of an angel requires either some revelation, or the presence of the object: but now

God hath a higher manner of understanding—he is a pure act ; above all these, he needs nothing without himself ; needs not the presence of the object, as angels do ; nor an instrument, as the beasts do ; nor imagination, as man doth ; for he knows all things that may be by his own all-sufficiency, and all things that shall be by his wise decree. Nature grows from worse to better, from lower to greater, till it brings us up to the being of beings and chiefest perfection. In metals there is the same proportion ; some baser, others more noble ; first iron, then lead, then tin, then brass, then silver, then gold. In plants some have only leaves, others flowers, others fruits, others aromatical gums and sweet spices. So in sensible creatures there is a wonderful difference in their ranks, from a gnat till you come to a man : there is a progress in nature, that still man may go further and further, till he find out the first cause. The whole world is a poem of praise, in which some verses have long feet and some short ; there are some small and inconsiderable creatures, and others higher, and nearer to the great perfection of God, that we may climb up from the creature until we come to converse with God.

5. In the mutual ministry and help of the creatures one to another. They are disposed in such a comely order, that they yield a mutual supply one to another, such as may best conserve the universe, cherish man, and glorify God. For instance, the earth is cherished by the heat of the stars, moistened by water, and by the temperament of heat and moisture it is made fruitful, and sends forth innumerable plants for the comfort and use of living creatures, that living creatures may be for the use of man ; it is wonderful to consider the subordination of all causes, and the proportion they bear one to another : the heavens work upon the elements, the elements work upon the earth, the earth yieldeth fruits and plants for the use and comfort of man and other living creatures. The prophet takes notice of this admirable climax and gradation that is in nature : Hosea ii. 21, 22, ‘ Saith the Lord, I will bear the heavens, and they shall bear the earth, and the earth shall bear the corn, and the wine, and the oil ; and they shall bear Jezreel.’ We are always looking to the next hand ; we call upon the corn, wine, and oil, and they can do nothing, except the earth send forth sap and influence. The earth can do nothing without the clouds, unless God unstop the bottles of heaven, and let out the rain ; the clouds can do nothing without the stars, and the stars can do nothing without God ; the creatures are all beholden one to another, and all to God. There is an excellent knot and chain of causes in the creation. Look, as the joints of the body are hollow to take in one another, so there is an established order in the course of nature, all the causes hang together.

6. In the wise government and conservation of all things according to the rules and laws of the creation. Divine providence is mightily seen in this, in the guiding of all things by the laws of nature, as in the constant course of the stars, by which we have the seasons of day and night. That man may go forth to labour, the sun gives him light ; and that man may go to his rest, the sun travels to the other hemisphere ; and God draws a curtain of darkness round about us, that we may sleep without disturbance ; so also that we may have winter and summer, spring and harvest in their seasons, according to God’s promise, Gen.

viii. 22. The sun hath its period and point in the heaven, according to which it doth rise and set. David takes notice of the sun's setting: Ps. civ. 19, 'He appointeth the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down;' the meaning is, he hath appointed the moon for seasons, the months being distinguished by the course of the moon. 'The sun knows his going down,' the days being measured by the motion of the sun. The length and shortness of days are all measured by God, and the sun knows when to set at an hour and minute according as God appointed him. Though there be every day some variety according to the degrees of the zodiac, yet the sun observes the just points of the compass: Job xxxviii. 12, 'He causeth the day-spring to know his place.' The sun knows when to rise at such and such an hour, and such a point of the heavens, he knows his place. So it is very notable for the other stars, though they move most swiftly, and though they never cease; though some go round in a slower, and some in a swifter space, yet they always keep their measures and proportions, and their motions are equally distant. The stars go round in four and twenty hours, and the planets in various motions, and though there be so many ten thousand millions of stars, yet they do not interfere and jostle one another. It is notable when God would express the numerousness of Abraham's posterity, he useth three expressions to him: Gen. xxii. 17, 'They shall be as the dust of the earth, as the sand of the sea-shore, and as the stars of heaven.' From this expression, wherein he promiseth him a multitude of children that should come of his loins, we may conclude that there must needs be a great company of stars. Now that in such a crowd and throng of stars that are always moving, there should be no clashing, no confusion, no interfering with one another, but still they keep their path, and go on according to the law and decree which God hath set unto them; who can admire this sufficiently? So in upholding all ranks of all other creatures, and guiding them for the great purposes and uses of providence. His gathering together the drops of the air: Job xxvi. 8, 'He binds up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them;' that he should keep up such a quantity of water in the thin clouds, as in so many bottles or barrels, till they be condensed into rain and then pour them out in drops for the good and use of man. So the power of God is mightily seen in bridling the sea. Though it be above the earth, yet it is said: Ps. civ. 9, 'He hath set bounds to the waters, that they may not pass over, that they turn not again to cover the earth.' Though above the earth, yet the Lord keeps them up in a heap together, and keeps them back that they shall not return to drown the world.

Thirdly, I come to answer an objection that might be commenced.

Obj. If God made the world in such harmony and order, whence came all those disorders that are in the world? We see some creatures are ravenous; other creatures are poisonous; all are frail, and still decaying and hasting to their own ruin. Whence come murrains, sicknesses, and diseases? whence come such destructive enmities and antipathies between beast and beast, yea and beasts of the same kind? whence come such dislocations, and unjoinings of nature by tempests and earthquakes? All elements have been one time or other routed into confusion; the air hath been imprisoned in the bowels of the earth,

from whence come earthquakes ; the sea swelleth above its banks, from whence come inundations ; the earth rolled hither and thither in the sea, which maketh dangerous shoals and quicksands ; and the fire reserved for the vastation of that great day, ' When the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth also, and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up,' 2 Peter iii. 10. Whence do these come ?

Ans. I answer. All these confusions and disorders of nature are the effects of sin. Our sins are as a secret fire that hath melted and burnt asunder the secret ties and confederations of nature. Thence are there so many destructions and degenerations, such enmities, cruelties, and antipathies among the creatures. Man, being the Lord of all things, was not only punished in his own person, but in the creatures, which are his servants and retinue. The Lord had given to us the free use of these things, and dominion over them ; but upon our rebellion, the frame of nature is much altered and changed : Gen. iii. 17, ' Cursed is the earth for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.' The word there used is ארצה, to show that it is cursed in that regard as it belonged to Adam, and was part of man's possession ; and by earth he doth not only mean the lower element, but the whole visible world ; it was made for man, and it was all cursed for man's sake. So it is taken elsewhere : Ps. cxv. 16, ' The heavens, even the heavens, are the Lord's ; but the earth hath he given to the children of men ;' and where it is said, 2 Peter iii. 7, ' The heavens and the earth that are now,' &c.—that is, the world. Wherever thou seest thorns and thistles to grow, remember that sin is the root of them. Whenever thou seest the seas toss, and the confederation of the creature to be disturbed, this is the fruit of man's disorder and rebellion against God. Whenever thou seest a fruitful land grow barren, that is the actual curse, a fruit of the original curse that is passed upon the earth for man's sin. So Rom. viii. 28, the apostle saith, ' The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.' Mark, the creature groans under the burden of vanity and corruption ; what is the reason ? It is not the fault of the creature, not willingly, for by the bent and poise of nature they all seek their own preservation ; they have a constant inclination to their own good ; but we, that had freewill and abused it, brought misery upon ourselves and the whole creation ; therefore the apostle saith, ' It was by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.' It noteth both the efficient and meritorious cause ; by reason of man as a sinner and by reason of God as a judge ; so the creature is subjected and brought under the burden of vanity. God, to show how much he was offended with man, would discover it by the confusions and disorders of nature. As Moses in a holy anger broke the tables when he saw the people turn aside to idolatry ; so when man turned unthankful and rebellious to God the king, it dissolved much of the order and beauty which otherwise would have been in the creation.

Obj. But because the objection speaks of many things, Whence come venemous things, &c. therefore take another question, what that is we may properly look upon to be a fruit and issue of the fall ?

I answer, all corruptive and destructive alterations ; for in entire

nature all alterations should have been perfect. So also the dying of the creature to feed and clothe man is a fruit of the fall, the issue of sin. It was sin that took away the usefulness of the creature to man; for in innocency they were all obedient to man; the creatures were ready to fall at his foot, and were at his beck. So all the enmities of creatures among themselves are the fruit of the curse. All monstrosities and deformities came in by the fall. Therefore the prophet when he speaks of our restoration by Christ, it doth imply the restoration of the creature. The sun, by reason of sin, hath lost much of his light. When man is fully restored in glory, 'The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun; and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days,' Isa. xxx. 26, 'then the lamb and the lion shall lie down together,' Isa. xi. 6, 7, for thus it was in innocency. Those places decipher the happiness of the creature upon man's full restoration; and imply how it was before man's fall, God made all things good,' Gen. i. 31. But now before the fall I suppose there were some things poisonous, and some things corruptible; and my reason is, because God would have the world to be furnished with all kinds of natures; therefore there ought to be corruptible natures as well as incorruptible, and poisonous creatures as well as those that are wholesome, though they could do man no harm. If a man comes into an artificer's shop, and seeth many instruments, he thinks them superfluous; at length he takes up a sharp-edged tool which wounds him; this is no blame to the artificer but to himself; it is his own fault, because he did not know the use of it: so these things were to set forth the glory of God; but when man by sin lost his knowledge, they proved obnoxious and hurtful to him. Now for toads and venomous plants, I believe most of them were the fruits of the curse of the earth, they being not so much parts of the world, as plagues of the world; therefore they came in by the fall, and so should put us in mind of the degeneration of the creature.

Use 1. It discovers the glory of God.

1. The whole world is but God's shop, where are the masterpieces of his wisdom and majesty; these are seen very much in the order of causes, and admirable contrivance of the world.

[1.] The wisdom of God and his counsel is mightily seen. The world is not a work of chance, but of counsel and rare contrivance. All that the Lord did here, he did it by art, and according to the inward idea and frame that was in his own mind; therefore the prophet saith, Isa. xl. 12, 'He hath weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance.' God did as it were take a balance into his hands and weigh out all the creatures; he hath disposed all things by number, weight, and measure; he hath done it in exact proportion. Oh, let us admire the wisdom of God! it is above our search: Eccles. iii. 11, 'No man can find out the work of the Lord from the beginning to the end;' we may admire it in the general, and say it is all good, but we cannot find it out. Some little glimpses of his wisdom we have, that we may cry out, He is a great God, wonderful in counsel, mighty in working. But oh, the rare and wonderful contrivance! we cannot discern all the beauty and all the order of it. Did we but consider the various disposition of light and darkness, of heat and cold, of moisture and dryness, the artifice that

is seen in all things that he hath made, we should say, certainly he that made these things is a wise God, and wonderful in counsel. We know the power of God by making all things out of nothing; but we know the wisdom of God by making all things in such an exquisite frame and order. Do but compare it with yourselves; we are soon tired, it is much to us to promote a petty interest in the world, to spread our small nets, and extend and reach out our heart to the cares of our private families; but how wise is that God that had the model of all things within himself, from the elephant to the ant, that disposed of all things in such a manner, that hath made and formed them with such apt proportions, that guideth the courses of the heavens, and keepeth the stars in their paths and order!

[2.] The majesty and greatness of God. Look up to him, that is at the upper end of all these causes, that are so sweetly subordinate to one another in the world; and he can turn them as he pleaseth: Job, speaking of the bright cloud, saith, chap. xxxvii. 12, 'It is turned round about by his counsels; that they may do whatsoever he commands.' Look up to him that is the head of angels. We are dazzled at the splendour and magnificence of an earthly king or prince; when we see him surrounded with dukes, earls and lords, these seem great things to us. How should we wonder at the majesty of God, that is encompassed with cherubim and seraphim, principalities, powers, thrones and dominions! How do we wonder at the majesty of kings riding in triumph in their chariots! Oh, how should we wonder at him that rides upon the wings of the wind! It was the brag of the king of Assyria, Isa. xix. 8, 'Are not my princes altogether kings?' But he hath angels for his courtiers, and clouds for his chariots, Ps. xviii. 10, 11, and a golden garment of light for his covering, Ps. civ. 2, whose throne is in heaven, and footstool is upon earth; and in heaven he sits in great majesty, commanding all things; and hath all creatures ready pressed for his service; he can but beckon to them, and they engage in his quarrel: Judges. v. 20, 'They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.' He hath the stars in order, and all causes in order to fight his battles against a wicked man. The fighting of the stars I believe might be explained out of Josephus, lib. v. cap. 6, who thus relates it: 'When Israel was to engage against the Canaanites, there arose a great storm of hail, which the wind drove violently in the faces of the Canaanites, and did so benumb their hands with cold, that carried the targets, darts, and slings, that they could not use them; and did so batter their eyes, that it took away their sight, that they could not look up: but it came on the backs of the Israelites, which encouraged them to fall upon them, so that they made an utter slaughter of them.' Certainly the force of the stars is very great upon storms of hail, thunder, and winds: Job xxxvii. 6, 'He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth: likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.' So, ver. 12, 'He turned it about by his counsels, that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.' He can call the winds, and they will make a ready answer to God: Job. xxxviii. 35, 'Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here are we?' All creatures are ready; he doth but beckon to the creatures, and they presently go

upon his errand ; Lord, here are we, send us : whether shall I go ? saith the lightning ; where shall I go ? saith the thunder ; where shall I go ? saith the hail. They are ready to be despatched in an errand for the punishment of sinners.

SERMON XI.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.—HEB. xi. 3.

Use. 2. It showeth us the excellency of order ; how pleasing order and method is to God : God hath always delighted in it. All his works are managed and carried on in an accurate order. So in all artificial works ; God speaks like a wise architect about the ark of Noah ; God gave directions how it should be framed : Gen. vi. 15, ‘The length of it shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth fifty cubits, the height thirty cubits.’ So for the tabernacle, it was according to the pattern in the mount, Exod. xxv. ; so for the table of show-bread, the knobs, bowls, and shafts of the candlestick, God gave special directions about them. Certainly God is a God of order, and not of confusion, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. All order is from God ; but all discord and confusion is from the devil. Order is pleasing to him in the state and civil administrations, in the church, and in the course of your private conversations.

1. In civil administrations in the commonwealth, there are several orders and constitutions that God hath made. The beauty of the world lieth in hills and valleys ; so in the state, some advanced to high places, others are low and poor. To bring all to one size, pitch and level, would soon introduce confusion into the world. There is order in heaven, order in hell, and there should have been order in innocency. There is order in heaven among the good angels. The scripture speaks of an archangel, 1 Thes. iv. 16 ; though he be not a monarch, there are others of the same rank and order : Dan. x. 13, ‘Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me.’ And we read in Job of the morning stars, Job xxxviii. 7 ; that is, the archangels that excel the rest in glory. There are many of them, and God himself presides among them. Then there are inferior ministering angels, thrones, principalities, powers, dominions. Though we cannot define the difference, yet the scripture plainly intimates one, and lays down an order and subordination among the angels. Nay, there is some kind of order in hell itself. There is a prince among the infernal spirits ; whence comes that expression, ‘The devil and his angels,’ Mat. xxv. 41 ; and Rev. xii. 7, ‘The dragon and his angels,’ who is ‘called the devil and Satan,’ ver. 9. Jesus Christ, though he doth not positively lay it down, yet he doth not deny the common opinion of the Jews, that Beelzebub was the prince of evil spirits. The devils are not without their head and prince. And in innocency there should have been order too, if we had continued

in that state. There would have been government and some inequality; there would have been difference of sex, women and men; the relation of fathers and children; the disparity of age, young men and old; now much more is there need of it since the fall. There can be no peace without it. *Pax est tranquillitas ordinis*—peace is the quiet of everything in its proper place: it is a great blessing when all keep their due subordination, when magistrates keep their place, ministers and tradesmen keep their place; otherwise things will be shamefully brought into confusion. Thus civil peace is the fruit of order, when every one keeps their place. When the elements are out of their places, then there are confusions in nature.

2. The Lord loves order in the church. I have observed the church is set forth in scripture by the same similitudes and resemblances by which the frame of the world is; by an army, and by a house, and by the body of man. By an army or host: the church is ‘terrible as an army with banners,’ Cant. vi. 4; when all administrations are regularly carried according to the mind of God. It is compared to a house: Eph. ii. 22, ‘In whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.’ And the prophet speaks of the order of the church: Isa. liv. 12, ‘I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles.’ It is compared to the body of man, which receives supplies and nourishment from the head: Col. ii. 19, ‘And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.’ Usually we are very loose and arbitrary in point of order. That is the great security, the fence and hedge of religion, when some instruct in the word, some are for inspection of manners, some minister to the poor; when there are some to govern, and others to be governed; when all keep their place, the church is beautiful, and terrible as an army with banners. This was the rejoicing of the apostle, Col. ii. 5, ‘To behold their order and steadfastness.’ The order of the church doth not consist in idle foppish ceremonies, but in decent administrations. But when men set the feet where the head should be, make every one to be guides to the church, then the beauty of the church is defaced, and all error and confusion is let into the church. The apostle complains of ‘Some that did walk disorderly,’ 2 Thes. iii. 11, *ἀτάκτως*; the word signifies out of rank; this provokes the just suspension of the influences of his grace.

3. The excellency of order in private conversation. We must be more orderly in disposing our actions for the conveniency of the spiritual life. Nothing so fit for a man as order and method in his private conversation but more especially in the spiritual life. We should not walk at random and at large. Till there be a settled frame in the course of our lives, it will never do well; that we may not live at adventure in religion, and do good by flashes. God complains of them that are only good by fits, Hosea vi. 4. If we do not task ourselves, and propose a settled course, we shall be fickle and inconstant, off and on with God: Ps. i. 23, ‘To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God.’ We should state all the courses and exercises of religion in the holy life; that so our duty may not be a hindrance, but a help to another. We act loosely when we act

arbitrarily, and at random; and shall be soon taken off by every allegation and plea of the flesh, if we do not lay a necessity upon ourselves, and settle a stated course of religious duties in our lives. You may do this lawfully: to this end God hath given us spiritual prudence and christian discretion. There are precepts in general for giving and doing, but for measure, number, and order, God would leave that to christian discretion. It is said, Ps. cxii. 5, 'A good man guides all his affairs with discretion.' Do not think such a stated course will be a snare to you, but it will prove a great advantage, and be a hedge to duty. All the experiences of the saints seal to it; they could not else secure themselves against neglects and omissions, if they did not lay an engagement upon themselves by their own purposes and constitutions. Duties of ordinary recourse may be easily thus disposed. I confess it requires some wisdom to state it aright, lest we lie bound in chains of our own making, and watchfulness and resolution that we may keep it. When the proportions are rational, every idle objection should not take us off, for it is in the nature of paying a vow. Time dedicated to God is not in our power, nor revocable upon every slight occasion, only in case of inviolable necessity, to which duties of a divine institution do give place.

Use. 3. It discovers the odiousness of sin that disjointed the frame of nature. When God made the world, 'he saw every thing he had made, and behold it was very good,' Gen. i. 31; but Solomon when he looked upon it, he saw all was 'vanity of vanities,' Eccles. i. 2. What is the reason? sin intervened and so the course of nature was altered. It had been otherwise but for sin; the creature had continued in their order, had we continued in our innocence. Let me spread a few considerations before you.

1. Do but consider what cause God hath to be angry with us. We are angry with those that break down a curious frame or contrivement we have made, as if any break curious glasses, pictures, or images, or a handsome structure. But consider, we have cracked the frame of the universe. The ties which hold the world are loosened by our sins, and much of the accurate order of the universe is inverted. There is a vanity among the creatures themselves, and sin and rebellion to us. Therefore when thy thoughts are cold and barren in acknowledging sin, especially in conceiving the evil that is in original sin, consider of this circumstance; it turned a paradise into a wilderness and rude common; it broke the frame of nature. As Moses, when he was angry with the Israelites, broke the tables; so God hath broken the great frame of nature. Let that break your hearts which hath broken the world; and that which hath wrought so much mischief in nature, let it trouble your souls.

2. Consider what a fit circumstance and consideration this is to represent the odiousness of sin; here we have a sensible and constant memorial of the fruits of our rebellion. Man, being in a lower sphere of understanding, knows causes by their effects. Oh, see what a cause sin is; look upon the effects of it in the disorders that are in the world: Jer. ii. 19, 'Know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.' What would you think of that gall, a drop of which is enough to embitter an ocean

of sweetness? Such is sin. One sin poisoned all mankind at once, and cracked and dissolved the frame of nature. There were indeed presently upon the fall two dreadful effects of sin's influence, the misery Adam brought upon his own posterity, and the vanity he brought upon the creature; both are sad and continual resemblances. The first I confess is a very great representation of the evil of sin; every child that is born is a new memorial of the fall. God as it were said to Adam, as the prophet to Gehazi, 2 Kings v 27, 'The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and to thy seed for ever;' now thou hast sinned, every child born shall be a leper. So all the children of Adam are as so many pledges and memorials of the folly and disobedience he had committed against God. But look without, and the creatures are made unhappy by man's fall. When we have drawn company with us into misery, their sight and presence doth but increase our sorrow; as if a prodigal should look upon the lean faces of his family, he cannot but with the more regret own the shame of his own excesses. We may all go to God, and say with David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17, 'Lord, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but as for these sheep, what have they done?' so, Lord, we and our fore-fathers have all sinned against thee; but what have the creatures done, that they are destroyed and devoured? These memorials are constantly represented; not a bit we eat, not a cloth we put on, but may return these thoughts into our minds, these are the fruits of our sin. In innocency Adam was not ashamed of his nakedness, and the creatures might not be slain for our food.

3. We have no cause to exempt ourselves from this duty of mourning by laying the guilt upon Adam; as if he only were unthankful and rebellious against God. Consider, by sin we do as it were consent to Adam's act, and so we are accessory *post factum* to his guilt. Imitation is an approbation, and an implicit and interpretative consent. Saith Christ to the Jews, Mat. xxiii. 37, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets;' and ver. 36, 'Whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.' How did they slay them? Because they continued still vexing the servants of God, therefore they are said to slay Zacharias. They that go on in any sin, do subscribe to the acts of those that went before them; we have continued in Adam's course of rebelling against God, therefore we are justly chargeable with his act. The father is fore-faulted for rebellion, and the child, continuing in the same course, doth approve his act, and besides his own personal guilt, is chargeable with the crimes of his forefathers. So that we may say, we have unsettled the universe. Jude 11, it is said 'these perished in the gainsaying of Korah.' How could that be, when there was such a huge distance and space of time between these and Korah? The meaning is, by practising the same sins, they came into a fellowship of the guilt; and imitating the fault, they became liable to the same judgment. Adam's first act brought on the original curse upon the creature, but our actual sins bring in an actual curse. As there is original and actual sin; so there is an original and an actual curse. It is true, Adam alone brought on the original curse: Gen. iii. 17, 'Cursed be the ground for thy sake:' but we bring on an actual curse: Ps. cvii. 33, 34, 'He turns rivers into a wilderness, and water-springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them

that dwell therein.' Our actual sinning spoils the earth, and makes it barren and disorders the elements, and makes the rain from heaven unseasonable. Yea, we are guilty every day of doing that which Adam did once—laying a greater burden upon the creatures by abusing them to pomp, pride, excess, and carnal trust; so you need not complain of Adam, but of your own selves. The creatures do not say, Lord, avenge our quarrel upon Adam, but upon these who have abused us: Hab. ii. 11, 'The stone out of the wall shall cry out, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.' The stone and timber shall cry, Lord, avenge us against this oppressor; the house that is builded by extortion is crying to God against the unjust possessor. So James v. 3, 4, 'The rust of the gold and silver shall be a witness against them. Behold, the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth.' The rusty coin out of the coffer crieth, and requireth vengeance at God's hands; the creatures that have been abused to disorder and excess do cry out of the glutton's belly and drunkard's throat, O Lord, avenge us! The clothes upon our backs do as it were cry, Lord, we are abused to pride and vanity; take notice of our quarrel and plea against man!

4. If we do not bemoan this disorder of nature, the very creatures will shame us. They groan under this burden of vanity that is brought upon them; but we are senseless, slight and careless. It is even true what Christ said in another case, Luke xix. 40, 'If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.' So, if we hold our peace, the creatures will speak to our shame. Whither is man fallen? The senseless and inanimate creatures are more moved with the evil of the present state than we are. That is the reason the prophet doth turn so often to the creatures, and address himself and speak to them: Jer. xii. 4, 'How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither for the wickedness of them that dwell therein?' And Lam. ii. 18, 'O wall of the daughter of Sion, let tears run down like a river day and night.' The prophet calls upon the wall because the people were senseless. We go dancing like madmen to our misery and execution; and the creatures mourn and groan under the burden of our sins: Hosea iv. 3, 'The land mourneth,' viz. for oaths, but where is the swearer that mourns? The prophets often turn from men, and speak to the creatures: Deut. xxxii. 1, 'Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.' And Micah vi. 2, 'Hear, O mountains, the Lord's controversy.' And, Jer. xxii. 29, 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord;' because men will take no notice. The prophets may fret out their hearts, and spend their lungs in vain, before men will be sensible; therefore he speaks to them. You hear the ox lowing, and the creatures groaning under the present vanity, and you do not lay it to heart. When you see unseasonable weather and barrenness, consider all these are the fruits of the original curse.

5. We of all the other parts of the creation have most cause to lay it to heart, because there is none so disordered and shattered by the fall as man is. There was none so excellent as man, being at first framed by the counsel and contrivance of God. When the world was made, it was said, 'Let it be;' but man was made by counsel, 'Let

us make man after our own image,' Gen. i. 26. Man was made at first after the image of God, now he is scarce the image of himself; like a defaced picture, that hath some obscure lineaments of a fair draft. Man was a comely, beautiful, orderly creature at first; but now there are but some obscure relics of this left. The soul was to be a good guide to the body, and the body a dexterous instrument of the soul; but now both are out of frame; we have spoiled the temper of our bodies, and the order of our souls. The rabbis say, when Adam tasted the forbidden fruit, his head ached; certainly it is true in a spiritual sense, then began aches and pains; how is all shattered and discomposed! We read in ecclesiastical story of a famous captain who triumphed in many battles, but afterward he fell into disgrace with the emperor, and first his lady was deflowered before his face, then his eyes bored out, and he was turned out like a blind beggar begging, *Date obolum Belizario*, give one halfpenny for poor Belizarius. Before the fall, man was the favourite of heaven, but after the fall he was presently made a slave of hell, his will was deflowered, then his eyes were pulled out, so that now having little knowledge and little wisdom even to guide ourselves in a moral course, the passions rebel against reason, and many times man is not only tempted, but drawn aside by his own lusts, and enticed, James i. 14. Nay, many times the body riseth up in arms against the soul. Paul groans because of a law in his members, Rom. vii. 23. Oh what a poor disordered routed creature man is! body and soul all discomposed and out of order.

6. There is a loss to us by the disorder of nature, and by the distemper of the creature. Man by the fall lost *imperium sui*, the command of himself, and *imperium suum*, his command over the creatures; they are enemies to man because he hath rebelled against God. If ever we find them hurtful and rebellious, we may thank ourselves, they do but revenge their maker's quarrel. They think it is their duty to turn off their allegiance from him that hath proved a traitor to God, therefore they sometimes oppress us with their power and greatness. It is usual with God to execute his judgments by the creature: Pharaoh and the Egyptians were drowned in the sea; the earth opened to swallow up Korah and his company; the stars fought against Sisera; Herod was eaten up with lice; Egypt devoured with frogs. Therefore the vanity of the creature is a loss to us; there is not only an enmity between them one among another, but they have lost their allegiance to man. Nay, they are ready to go if the Lord do but hiss for them. Job xxxviii. 35, 'Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?' The lightnings say unto God, Here we are; the winds say, Shall we go and blast their fruits and trees? here we are, Lord, send us. The clouds say, Shall we pour out in abundance, and overwhelm the earth? Isa. vii. 18, 'The Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.' It is an expression that sets forth the power of God over the creatures. If God do but signify his pleasure, they are very ready to avenge their creator's quarrel against man.

The second circumstance in the creation is the instrument or means by which all things were created, and that is, 'By the word of God.'

Here a question ariseth, what is meant by the word of God? whether that which they call God's external imperial word, or whether God's essential and substantial word? The reason of the doubt is, because God made all things by Christ, and Christ is often called the word. It is his solemn title, and that in reference to the creation: John i. 1, 'In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God;' and ver. 3, 'By him were all things created.' And Heb. i. 2, 'He hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.' So that Jesus Christ is the eternal word. I shall answer this doubt in these propositions.

1. It is very true that the second person, the Lord Jesus Christ, had a great stroke in the creation: Ps. xxxiii. 6, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.' There is the whole trinity; there is the Lord, and the word of the Lord, and there is the breath of his mouth; that is, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Prov. viii. 22, 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.' There is Christ's eternity, and his hand and power in the creation: ver. 23, 'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was;' that is, in the first emanation of his power, Christ was then discovered: John i. 3, 'By him were all things made that were made.' Col. i. 16, 'By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth.' Probably this may be held forth in that speech ten times repeated: 'The Lord said, the Lord spake.' Nay some of the Jews acknowledge an uncreated word in all those expressions. Philo saith, *ὁ λόγος τὸν κόσμον ἐποίησεν*. And it is not to be disregarded, that the Chaldee paraphrase makes the word to be God himself.

2. Yet, besides this essential word, it is clear that we must understand also his imperial word, or the word of his command; so it is interpreted, Ps. xxxiii. 9, 'He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.' Here was God's imperial word. So Ps. cxlviii. 5, 'He commanded, and they were created.' God did create the world by his call and imperial word. So Rom. iv. 17, 'He believed in God, who quickened the dead, and called things that be not, as though they were,' that is, by a call he maketh them be. Moses bringeth in God speaking imperially, 'Let it be.'

3. This imperial word must not be understood properly as if God spake; as if there were an audible voice, 'Let there be light;' but it must be understood *ἀνθρωποπαθῶς*, after the manner of men. It is an allusion to princes, if they would have anything done, they do but say, Let it be done, that is enough; as the centurion in the Gospel, Mark viii. 9, 'I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.' When God said, 'Let it be,' he did but signify his will, and the effect presently did follow. So that by the word of God you must understand the effectual decree of his will concerning the making of all the creatures, and the present execution of it. And this manner of speaking is used to show with what swiftness and easiness all things were brought to pass which God willeth, and that it is infinitely more easy with God to do

what he pleaseth, than for man to speak a word, or think a thought of what he would have to be done.

Quest. Here is another question. If nothing is to be understood but God's will, and willing the creation of all things? then whether the making of the world in six days be only for our understanding, or whether it be so really and indeed; whether all things were not created in the twinkling of an eye by God's will and pleasure; or whether it were done by distinct days, as the history in Genesis seems to intimate? The doubt hath been moved by divines of the greatest note. Austin expressly was of this opinion; so Cajetan, and some among the reformed; their reason is, because God is omnipotent, and could make all things in a moment, therefore why should he make such a slow progress, and go from day to day? And the author of Ecclesiasticus saith, 'He that liveth for ever, made all things at once.' They quote scripture for it: Gen. ii. 4, 5, 'In the day that God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in earth, and every herb of the field before it grew.'—in that very day say they, when God created the heaven and the earth, he created all the other creatures. And they say that the mentioning of the six days was only inserted by Moses, because by so many distinctions and representations God showed his creatures to the angels, and to declare the natural dependence of all things upon one another, and also for our incapacity to conceive distinctly of things at once.

Ans. But all this is but a figment and gross supposition without the scripture. Though God could make all things in a moment, yet we must not reason from God's power to God's will, nor instruct him how to bring forth his work: Rom. xi. 34, 'For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?' And for that place, Gen. ii. 4, 5, 'In the day that the Lord made the earth and the heavens,' &c., some answer thus: It is true they were all made, *potentia*, in power, though not *actu*, actually in one day. Or rather the word day must be twice repeated: in the day that God made the heavens and the earth; and in the day that God made the plants, &c, for day there is taken more largely for time. But to confirm you in the history of Moses, it is plain that God made the world in that order; there are these apparent reasons for it—

[1.] If God made the world all at once, how could Moses with truth put down such a distinct commendation of every day's work?

[2.] Moses wrote historically, therefore his words must be properly understood.

[3.] Why should he say, God made light before the firmament and stars, if we go to natural dependence and order? It should be first the firmament, then the stars, then light. Therefore it is certain Moses followed that order in his history, that God observed in the production of all things.

[4.] If all creatures were thus created together, how could there be darkness upon the face of the deep? And how could the earth be said to be without form and void? Then it would have plants and beasts, if all were made together.

[5.] The reason of the sabbath would be to no purpose; how could Moses say with truth, Therefore the sabbath must be sanctified, because

God rested the seventh day? Therefore we may conclude, that though the effect followed as soon as God willed it, yet God willed the creation of all things in order; such a creature this day, and such a creature the next day.

Use 1. It helpeth us to conceive of the creation, all things were done by his word according to his will. The Gnostics feigned the aspectable world was made by the angels; but the scripture is plain: 2 Peter iii. 5, 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water.' He made them all without help and without labour; no creature, no instrument was serviceable to him in it; all was infinitely more easy to God than the conceiving of a thought can be to yourselves.

Use 2. Here is much comfort and profit to you.

1. Much comfort to poor souls that are smitten with remorse, and touched with a deep sense of their misery and wretched and sinful condition by nature. Usually, at first conversion, you may observe men have such a strong sense of the present evils and distempers of their spirits, that they are apt to sink under the burden of their discouragements, and to say, surely this hard heart will never be softened! this blind mind will never be enlightened! these stubborn affections will never be subdued and mortified! Consider the first creation when you expect the new creation. Think of the power of him that can call the things that are not, as though they were; one creating word is enough. Compare the benefit of the first creation and the second together: 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into your hearts,' &c. In the original it is *ὁ εἶπεν*—he that spoke light out of darkness, by his word he could bring it forth presently; he can speak light to our souls, though there were nothing but darkness, confusion and disorder. You may go to God as the centurion, Mat. viii. 8, 'Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.' So do you say, Lord, speak but the word, then my soul shall be clean. It is observable that Jesus Christ, when he would discover any notable effects, he speaketh creating words; as 'Be thou clean;' 'Be thou made whole;' 'Follow me;' 'Lazarus, come forth.' How may a poor soul go to God when he is thus discouraged, and say, Speak light out of darkness, speak grace, O Lord, one word is enough, thou canst easily reach the bottom of the electing faculty.

2. It is of great use to encourage believers to wait for the accomplishment of the promises. Every promise rightly understood is a creating word. When God saith that he will make them perfect to every good work, it is as much as if he said, Be thou perfect, be thou justified, be thou sanctified, be thou enabled to every work of holiness, be thou glorified. When he saith, 'It is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom,' to make you able to every good work, to keep you by his power to salvation, he hath signified his pleasure, and that is enough to assure us it shall be effected. Look upon the word of God in creation as a pledge of the accomplishment of the promises. We doubt, because we are ignorant of the power of God's word. Your unbelief would be much abated if you would consider his creating the world,—how God could bring all things out of nothing. All the creatures are looking-glasses, that we may read what God can do by his word; in them his

sufficiency and efficacy are proposed to us to behold. When we have nothing left us but a promise, we may see all things in it. If God hath made heaven by his word, he can give thee heaven, and make good his promises by his word. God's word is the foundation of the creature's being, and the foundation of your faith. If heaven could be made and prepared by the word of his power, certainly the promises will be accomplished and made good to your souls, and you shall be brought to heaven by the word of his truth.

The third and last circumstance is the matter, or rather term, from which God's work began; there was no pre-jacent or pre-existent matter. It is a note of form and order; *ex nihilo*, that is, *post nihilum*—'So that things that are seen were not made of things that do appear.' The words have undergone variety of constructions. Calvin, leaving out the preposition, rendereth it, *Ut non apparentium spectacula fierent*, making it parallel with Rom. i. 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.' But this is to force the grammatical construction. Some understand by 'things not seen,' the idea or module of all things in the divine mind; but this is to bring down the apostle's language to the doctrine of the school of Plato. Some understand the chaos, and that the apostle alludeth to the translation of the Septuagint of what is in the original, 'And the earth was without form, and void,' Gen. i. 2, the Septuagint renders ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀπαρασκευάστος—The earth was invisible and unprepared. This may be in part respected here, for 'darkness was upon the face of the deep;' and so it may well be called, 'things not appearing.' Rather by τὰ μὴ φαινόμενα you may understand τὰ μὴ ὄντα—out of nothing. And the word was suited with the apostle's scope, which is to prove that faith contents itself with the word of God, though nothing be seen; that which was not at all could not be seen. Though these two latter expositions may be compounded, all things were made either immediately by God out of nothing, or immediately out of the chaos.

Quest. But here may be a doubt: How did God make all things out of nothing, since man was made of the dust of the earth? and all things were made out of the chaos, the first mass and lump that was without form? I answer, There is a double creation: out of nothing, and out of that which is as good as nothing.

1. There is a creation out of mere nothing; so the Lord framed many things, as the heaven of heavens, the dwelling-place of God and angels, and the spirits of blessed men. He could not make that from the earth and water, for that was not. So the chaos, or the earth that was void and without form, God made that out of nothing. And God made light out of nothing—'He commanded light to shine out of darkness,' 2 Cor. iv. 6. So the angels, and the souls of men, which were breathed into them by the breath of God: Gen. ii. 7, 'God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.' God made all these out of mere nothing.

2. God made some things out of foregoing matter, which is yet called a creation, because the matter was altogether indisposed and unfit for such a use. There was no disposition in the matter to receive

such a shape as God bestowed upon it; the form was merely from the power of God, as the firmament was made out of the water: Ps. civ. 3, 'He layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters;' that is, the firmament, which was made by the rarefaction and expansion of the waters. So the sun, moon, and stars were made out of the first light; for either it was annihilated or it yet remaineth. Annihilated it could not be, for the wise God made nothing but for some end, and we do not read that he abolished anything he had made; therefore it remaineth dispersed in the sun, moon, and stars, otherwise what is the use of it? Fishes were made out of the waters: Gen. i. 20, 'Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life.' Birds were made out of the earth, and so beasts: Gen. ii. 19, 'And out of the ground the Lord formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air.' The body of man was made out of the dust of the ground; Gen. ii. 7, 'And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground;' and the woman was taken out of the man: Gen. ii. 22, 'And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman.'

Use. God by this would teach the world what to think of him. He created the world out of mere nothing, or out of matter not prepared; he created them wholly by his word, having no partaker with him. The great thing that we should learn hence is God's power. That you may consider it with profit, I shall lay down a few propositions.

1. Power is one of God's greatest perfections; that serves most for the comfort of the creature. It is love to make a promise; truth to regard his promise; and it is his power that makes good his promise. The warrant of our faith is the truth of God; but the proper ground of our faith is the power and sufficiency of God. When the apostle speaks of Abraham that was the father of the faithful, his faith is bottomed and founded on God's power; he believed that God was able to do it: Rom. iv. 21, 'Being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.' This is the proper ground of our faith, that God is every way sufficient to make good his promise. It is the prime perfection of God; for it is the power of God that maketh all other the perfections of God valid and effectual for the comfort of poor creatures. Therefore may we receive comfort from his mercy, because he is able to show mercy; therefore may we depend upon his goodness and truth, because it is seconded with the power and all-sufficiency of God: Eph. iii. 20, 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.'

2. In the creation there is no attribute so eminent as God's power. There was wisdom and goodness shown in the creation, but the main attribute is power. God's wisdom and his goodness appear in the creation, as they exist in created things; but God's infinite power is in himself. Therefore, when the apostle speaks of the knowledge of heathens, Rom. i. 20, he saith in the creation was manifested 'his eternal power and godhead.' That was the principal thing discovered in the work of creation: Rev. v. 12, 'Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches,' &c.

3 We must not only with a naked, idle speculation reflect upon

God's power but improve it to the uses of religion, as to fear and to trust.

[1.] To fear: Ps. xxxiii. 8, 'Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him;' Job xxxvii. 23, 24, 'Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in power. . . men do therefore fear him.' We should have a dread of God because of such power. Who would not fear to enter into the lists with him? By sins committed against God you draw omnipotency about your ears. Would you engage the mighty God against you? There are two causes of carnal compliance: we presume of God's mercy, and fear man's power. To check it, consider God is able by the rebuke of his countenance to turn us to nothing, that made us out of nothing.

[2.] Improve it to trust. In all your straits and exigencies, when nothing appears, then wait upon the Lord; he can create means when he finds none; he can produce all possible things into act, or leave them still in the womb of nothing. He can do you good by contrary means; as Christ cured the blind man's eyes by clay and spittle, by that which seemed to put them out.

SERMON XII.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.—
HEB. xi. 4.

THE apostle cometh to illustrate the properties of faith by the special experiences of the saints. He begins with Abel.

But you will say, Why doth he pass by Adam, the first man, and the first believer in the world? For four reasons.

1. Because Abel was the first persecuted man for righteousness, by Cain professing the same worship: whereas Adam lived a quiet life, without assault and molestation. And so it suits with the apostle's scope, which is to embolden believers against troubles and persecutions for Christ's sake. Here was the first instance of the distinction of men, Cain and Abel, brothers born of the same womb; nay, which is more, supposed to be twins of the same birth; yet one the seed of the woman, and the other the seed of the serpent. Therefore Abel is fitly propounded as the first pattern of faith; as Cain was the patriarch of unbelievers, as Tertullian calls him. And the apostle says, Jude 11, 'They have gone in the way of Cain.' This was an early instance of the enmity between the seeds, and the first pledge of the spite and malice which carnal men do now manifest against the children of God because of the old hatred. Adam was the first sinner, but Cain the first murderer. Therefore the apostle doth well begin with Abel, who was the first-fruits of the faithful; in him the envy and malignity of