

## INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

We have now before us the holy Bible, or *book*, for so *bible* signifies. We call it *the book*, by way of eminency, for it is incomparably the best book that ever was written, the book of books, shining like the sun in the firmament of learning, other valuable and useful books, like the moon and stars, borrowing their light from it. We call it the holy book, because it was written by holy men, and indited by the Holy Ghost; it is perfectly pure from all falsehood and corrupt intention; and the manifest tendency of it is to promote holiness among men. The great things of God's law and gospel are here *written* to us, that they might be reduced to a greater certainty, might spread further, remain longer, and be transmitted to distant places and ages more pure and entire than possibly they could be by report and tradition. And we shall have a great deal to answer for if these things which belong to our peace, being thus committed to us in black and white, be neglected by us as a strange and foreign thing, **#Ho 8:12**. The scriptures, or writings of the various inspired penmen, from Moses down to St. John, in which divine light, like that of the morning, shone gradually (the sacred canon being now completed), are all put together in this blessed Bible, which, thanks be to God, we have in our hands, and they make as perfect a day as we are to expect on this side of heaven. Every part was good, but all together very good. This is the *light that shines in a dark place* (**#2Pe 1:19**), and a dark place indeed the world would be without the Bible.

We have before us that part of the Bible which we call the *Old Testament*, containing the acts and monuments of the church from the creation almost to the coming of Christ in the flesh, which was about four thousand years—the truths then revealed, the laws then enacted, the devotions then paid, the prophecies then given, and the events which concerned that distinguished body, so far as God saw fit to preserve to us the knowledge of them. This is called a *testament*, or *covenant* (διαθηκη), because it was a settled declaration of the *will* of God concerning man in a federal way, and had its force from the designed death of the great testator, *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, **#Re 13:8**. It is called the *Old Testament*, with relation to the *New*, which does not cancel and supersede it, but crown and perfect it, by the bringing in of that better hope which was typified and foretold in it; the Old Testament still remains glorious, though the New far exceeds in glory, **#2Co 3:9**.

We have before us that part of the Old Testament which we call the *Pentateuch*, or five books of Moses, that servant of the Lord who excelled all the other prophets, and typified the great prophet. In our Saviour's distribution of the books of the Old Testament into the *law*, the *prophets*, and the *psalms*, or *Hagiographa*, these are the *law*, for they contain not only the laws given to Israel, in the last four, but the laws given to Adam, to Noah, and to Abraham, in the first. These five books were, for aught we know, the first that ever were written; for we have not the least mention of any *writing* in all the book of Genesis, nor till God bade Moses write (**#Ex 17:14**); and some think Moses himself never learned to write till God set him his copy in the writing of the Ten Commandments upon the tables of stone. However, we are sure these books are the most ancient writings now extant, and therefore best able to give us a satisfactory account of the most ancient things.

We have before us the first and longest of those five books, which we call *Genesis*, written, some think, when Moses was in Midian, for the instruction and comfort of his suffering brethren in Egypt. I rather think he wrote it in the wilderness, after he had been in the mount with God, where, probably, he received full and particular instructions for the writing of it. And, as he framed the tabernacle, so he did the more excellent and durable fabric of this book, exactly according to the pattern shown him in the mount, into which it is better to resolve the certainty of the things herein contained than into any tradition which possibly might be handed down from Adam to Methuselah, from him to Shem, from

him to Abraham, and so to the family of Jacob. *Genesis* is a name borrowed from the Greek. It signifies the *original*, or *generation*. Fitly is this book so called, for it is a history of originals--the creation of the world, the entrance of sin and death into it, the invention of arts, the rise of nations, and especially the planting of the church, and the state of it in its early days. It is also a history of generations--the generations of Adam, Noah, Abraham, &c., not endless, but useful genealogies. The beginning of the New Testament is called *Genesis* too (#Mt 1:1), Βιβλος γενεσεως, the book of the *genesis*, or *generation*, of Jesus Christ. Blessed be God for that book which shows us our remedy, as this opens our wound. Lord, open our eyes, that we may see the wondrous things both of thy law and gospel!

## INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS CHAPTER 1

The foundation of all religion being laid in our relation to God as our Creator, it was fit that the book of divine revelations which was intended to be the guide, support, and rule, of religion in the world, should begin, as it does, with a plain and full account of the creation of the world--in answer to that first enquiry of a good conscience, *Where is God my Maker?* #Job 35:10. Concerning this the pagan philosophers wretchedly blundered, and became vain in their imaginations, some asserting the world's eternity and self-existence, others ascribing it to a fortuitous concourse of atoms. Thus *the world by wisdom knew not God*, but took a great deal of pains to lose him. The holy scripture therefore, designing by revealed religion to maintain and improve natural religion, to repair the decays of it and supply the defects of it, since the fall, for the reviving of the precepts of the law of nature, lays down, at first, this principle of the unclouded light of nature, That this world was, in the beginning of time, created by a Being of infinite wisdom and power, who was himself before all time and all worlds. The entrance into God's word gives this light, #Ps 119:130. The first verse of the Bible gives us a surer and better, a more satisfying and useful, knowledge of the origin of the universe, than all the volumes of the philosophers. The lively faith of humble Christians understands this matter better than the elevated fancy of the greatest wits, #Heb 11:3.

We have three things in this chapter:--

- I. A general idea given us of the work of creation, #Ge 1:1,2.
- II. A particular account of the several days' work, registered, as in a journal, distinctly and in order. The creation of the light the first day (#Ge 1:3-5); of the firmament the second day (#Ge 1:6-8); of the sea, the earth, and its fruits, the third day (#Ge 1:9-13); of the lights of heaven the fourth day (#Ge 1:14-19); of the fish and fowl the fifth day (#Ge 1:20-23); of the beasts (#Ge 1:24,25); of man (#Ge 1:26-28); and of food for both the sixth day, #Ge 1:29,30.
- III. The review and approbation of the whole work, #Ge 1:31).

In these verses we have the work of creation in its epitome and in its embryo.

- I. In its epitome, (#Ge 1:1), where we find, to our comfort, the first article of our creed, that God the Father Almighty is the Maker of heaven and earth, and as such we believe in him.

1. Observe, in this verse, four things:--

(1.) The effect produced--the heaven and the earth, that is, the world, including the whole frame and furniture of the universe, the world and all things therein, #Ac 17:24. The world

is a great house, consisting of upper and lower stories, the structure stately and magnificent, uniform and convenient, and every room well and wisely furnished. It is the visible part of the creation that Moses here designs to account for; therefore he mentions not the creation of angels. But as the earth has not only its surface adorned with grass and flowers, but also its bowels enriched with metals and precious stones (which partake more of its solid nature and more valuable, though the creation of them is not mentioned here), so the heavens are not only beautified to our eye with glorious lamps which garnish its outside, of whose creation we here read, but they are within replenished with glorious beings, out of our sight, more celestial, and more surpassing them in worth and excellency than the gold or sapphires surpass the lilies of the field. In the visible world it is easy to observe,

[1.] Great variety, several sorts of beings vastly differing in their nature and constitution from each other. Lord, how manifold are thy works, and all good!

[2.] Great beauty. The azure sky and verdant earth are charming to the eye of the curious spectator, much more the ornaments of both. How transcendent then must the beauty of the Creator be!

[3.] Great exactness and accuracy. To those that, with the help of microscopes, narrowly look into the works of nature, they appear far more fine than any of the works of art.

[4.] Great power. It is not a lump of dead and inactive matter, but there is virtue, more or less, in every creature: the earth itself has a magnetic power.

[5.] Great order, a mutual dependence of beings, an exact harmony of motions, and an admirable chain and connection of causes.

[6.] Great mystery. There are phenomena in nature which cannot be solved, secrets which cannot be fathomed nor accounted for. But from what we see of heaven and earth we may easily enough infer the eternal power and Godhead of the great Creator, and may furnish ourselves with abundant matter for his praises. And let our make and place, as men, remind us of our duty as Christians, which is always to keep heaven in our eye and the earth under our feet.

(2.) The author and cause of this great work-GOD. The Hebrew word is *Elohim*, which bespeaks,

[1.] The power of God the Creator. *El* signifies *the strong God*; and what less than almighty strength could bring all things out of nothing?

[2.] The plurality of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This plural name of God, in Hebrew, which speaks of him as many though he is one, was to the Gentiles perhaps a savour of death unto death, hardening them in their idolatry; but it is to us a savour of life unto life, confirming our faith in the doctrine of the Trinity, which, though but darkly intimated in the Old Testament, is clearly revealed in the New. The Son of God, the eternal Word and Wisdom of the Father, was with him when he made the world (#Pr 8:30), nay, we are often told that the world was made by him, and nothing made without him, #Joh 1:3,10; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2. O what high thoughts should this form in our minds of that great God whom we draw nigh to in religious worship, and that great Mediator in whose name we draw nigh!

(3.) The manner in which this work was effected: *God created it*, that is, made it out of nothing. There was not any preexistent matter out of which the world was produced. The

fish and fowl were indeed produced out of the waters and the beasts and man out of the earth; but that earth and those waters were made out of nothing. By the ordinary power of nature, it is impossible that any thing should be made out of nothing; no artificer can work, unless he has something to work on. But by the almighty power of God it is not only possible that something should be made of nothing (the God of nature is not subject to the laws of nature), but in the creation it is impossible it should be otherwise, for nothing is more injurious to the honour of the Eternal Mind than the supposition of eternal matter. Thus the excellency of the power is of God and all the glory is to him.

(4.) When this work was produced: *In the beginning*, that is, in the beginning of time, when that clock was first set a going: time began with the production of those beings that are measured by time. Before the beginning of time there was none but that Infinite Being that inhabits eternity. Should we ask why God made the world no sooner, we should but darken counsel by words without knowledge; for how could there be sooner or later in eternity? And he did make it in the beginning of time, according to his eternal counsels before all time. The Jewish Rabbis have a saying, that there were seven things which God created before the world, by which they only mean to express the excellency of these things: The law, repentance, paradise, hell, the throne of glory, the house of the sanctuary, and the name of the Messiah. But to us it is enough to say, In the beginning was the Word, [#Joh 1:1](#).

2. Let us learn hence,

(1.) That atheism is folly, and atheists are the greatest fools in nature; for they see there is a world that could not make itself, and yet they will not own there is a God that made it. Doubtless, they are without excuse, but the god of this world has blinded their minds.

(2.) That God is sovereign Lord of all by an incontestable right. If he is the Creator, no doubt he is the owner and possessor of heaven and earth.

(3.) That with God all things are possible, and therefore happy are the people that have him for their God, and whose help and hope stand in his name, [#Ps 121:2; 124:8](#).

(4.) That the God we serve is worthy of, and yet is exalted far above, all blessing and praise, [#Ne 9:5,6](#). If he made the world, he needs not our services, nor can be benefited by them ([#Ac 17:24,25](#)), and yet he justly requires them, and deserves our praise, [#Re 4:11](#). If all is of him, all must be to him.

II. Here is the work of creation in its embryo, ([#Ge 1:2](#)), where we have an account of the first matter and the first mover.

1. A chaos was the first matter. It is here called the earth (though the earth, properly taken, was not made till the third day [#Ge 1:10](#)), because it did most resemble that which afterwards was called *earth*, mere earth, destitute of its ornaments, such a heavy unwieldy mass was it; it is also called *the deep*, both for its vastness and because the waters which were afterwards separated from the earth were now mixed with it. This immense mass of matter was it out of which all bodies, even the firmament and visible heavens themselves, were afterwards produced by the power of the Eternal Word. The Creator could have made his work perfect at first, but by this gradual proceeding he would show what is, ordinarily, the method of his providence and grace.

Observe the description of this chaos.

(1.) There was nothing in it desirable to be seen, for it was *without form and void*. *Tohu* and *Bohu*, *confusion and emptiness*; so these words are rendered, **#Isa 34:11**. It was shapeless, it was useless, it was without inhabitants, without ornaments, the shadow or rough draught of things to come, and not the image of the things, **#Heb 10:1**. The earth is almost reduced to the same condition again by the sin of man, under which the creation groans. See **(#Jer 4:23)**, *I beheld the earth, and lo it was without form, and void*. To those who have their hearts in heaven this lower world, in comparison with that upper, still appears to be nothing but confusion and emptiness. There is no true beauty to be seen, no satisfying fulness to be enjoyed, in this earth, but in God only.

(2.) If there had been any thing desirable to be seen, yet there was no light to see it by; for *darkness*, thick darkness, *was upon the face of the deep*. God did not create this darkness (as he is said to create the darkness of affliction, **(#Isa 45:7)**), for it was only the want of light, which yet could not be said to be wanted till something was made that might be seen by it; nor needs the want of it be much complained of, when there was nothing to be seen but confusion and emptiness. If the work of grace in the soul is a new creation, this chaos represents the state of an unregenerate graceless soul: *there is disorder, confusion, and every evil work*; it is empty of all good, for it is without God; it is dark, it is darkness itself. This is our condition by nature, till almighty grace effects a blessed change.

2. The Spirit of God was the first mover: He *moved upon the face of the waters*. When we consider the earth without form and void, methinks it is like the valley full of dead and dry bones. Can these live? Can this confused mass of matter be formed into a beautiful world? Yes, if a spirit of life from God enter into it, **#Eze 37:9**. Now there is hope concerning this thing; for the Spirit of God begins to work, and, if he work, who or what shall hinder? God is said to make the world by his Spirit, **(#Ps 33:6; Job 26:13)**; and by the same mighty worker the new creation is effected. He moved upon the face of the deep, as Elijah stretched himself upon the dead child, as the *hen gathers her chickens under her wings*, and hovers over them, to warm and cherish them, **(#Mt 23:37)**, as the eagle stirs up her nest, and *flutters over her young* (it is the same word that is here used), **#De 32:11**.

Learn hence, that God is not only the author of all being, but the fountain of life and spring of motion. Dead matter would be for ever dead if he did not quicken it. And this makes it credible to us that God should raise the dead. That power which brought such a world as this out of confusion, emptiness, and darkness, at the beginning of time, can, at the end of time, bring our vile bodies out of the grave, though it is *a land of darkness as darkness itself, and without any order* **(#Job 10:22)**, and can make them glorious bodies.

We have here a further account of the first day's work, in which observe,

1. That the first of all visible beings which God created was light; not that by it he himself might see to work (for the darkness and light are both alike to him), but that by it we might see his works and his glory in them, and might work our works while it is day. The works of Satan and his servants are works of darkness; but he that doeth truth, and doeth good, cometh to the light, and coveteth it, *that his deeds may be made manifest*, **#Joh 3:21**. Light is the great beauty and blessing of the universe. Like the firstborn, it does, of all visible beings, most resemble its great Parent in purity and power, brightness and beneficence; it is of great affinity with a spirit, and is next to it; though by it we see other things, and are sure that it is, yet we know not its nature, nor can describe what it is, or *by what way the light is parted*, **#Job 38:19,24**. By the sight of it let us be led to, and assisted in, the believing contemplation of him who is light, infinite and eternal light **(#1Jo 1:5)**, and the *Father of lights* **(#Jas 1:17)**, and who

dwells in inaccessible light, **#1Ti 6:16**. In the new creation, the first thing wrought in the soul is *light*: the blessed Spirit captives the will and affections by enlightening the understanding, so coming into the heart by the door, like the good shepherd whose own the sheep are, while sin and Satan, like thieves and robbers, climb up some other way. Those that by sin were darkness by grace become light in the world.

2. That the light was made by the word of God's power. He said, *Let there be light*; he willed and appointed it, and it was done immediately: *there was light*, such a copy as exactly answered the original idea in the Eternal Mind. O the power of the word of God! *He spoke, and it was done*, done really, effectually, and for perpetuity, not in show only, and to serve a present turn, for *he commanded, and it stood fast*: with him it was *dictum, factum--a word, and a world*. The word of God (that is, his will and the good pleasure of it) is quick and powerful. Christ is the Word, the essential eternal Word, and by him the light was produced, for *in him was light, and he is the true light, the light of the world, #Joh 1:9; 9:5*. The divine light which shines in sanctified souls is wrought by the power of God, the power of his word and of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, opening the understanding, scattering the mists of ignorance and mistake, and giving the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, as at first, *God commanded the light to shine out of darkness, #2Co 4:6*. Darkness would have been perpetually upon the face of fallen man if the Son of God had not *come, and given us an understanding, #1Joh 5:20*.
3. That the light which God willed, when it was produced, he approved of: God *saw the light that it was good*. It was exactly as he designed it, and it was fit to answer the end for which he designed it. It was useful and profitable; the world, which now is a palace, would have been a dungeon without it. It was amiable and pleasant. *Truly the light is sweet (#Ec 11:7); it rejoiceth the heart, #Pr 15:30*. What God commands he will approve and graciously accept; he will be well pleased with the work of his own hands. That is good indeed which is so in the sight of God, for he sees not as man sees. If the light is good, how good is he that is the fountain of light, from whom we receive it, and to whom we owe all praise for it and all the services we do by it!
4. That God *divided the light from the darkness*, so put them asunder as that they could never be joined together, or reconciled; for *what fellowship has light with darkness? #2Co 6:14*. And yet he divided time between them, the day for light and the night for darkness, in a constant and regular succession to each other. Though the darkness was now scattered by the light, yet it was not condemned to a perpetual banishment, but takes its turn with the light, and has its place, because it has its use; for, as the light of the morning befriends the business of the day, so the shadows of the evening befriend the repose of the night, and draw the curtains about us, that we may sleep the better. See **#Job 7:2**. God has thus divided time between light and darkness, because he would daily remind us that this is a world of mixtures and changes. In heaven there is perfect and perpetual light, and no darkness at all; in hell, utter darkness, and no gleam of light. In that world between these two there is a great gulf fixed; but, in this world, they are counter changed, and we pass daily from one to another, that we may learn to expect the like vicissitudes in the providence of God, peace and trouble, joy and sorrow, and may set the one over against the other, accommodating ourselves to both as we do to the light and darkness, bidding both welcome, and making the best of both.
5. That God divided them from each other by distinguishing names: *He called the light day, and the darkness he called night*. He gave them names, as the Lord of both; *for the day is his, the night also is his, #Ps 74:16*. He is the Lord of time, and will be so, till day and night shall come to an end, and the stream of time be swallowed up in the

ocean of eternity. Let us acknowledge God in the constant succession of day and night, and consecrate both to his honour, by working for him every day and resting in him every night, and meditating in his law day and night.

6. That this was the first day's work, and a good day's work it was. *The evening and the morning were the first day.* The darkness of the evening was before the light of the morning, that it might serve for a foil to it, to set it off, and make it shine the brighter. This was not only the first day of the world, but the first day of the week. I observe it to the honour of that day, because the new world began on the first day of the week likewise, in the resurrection of Christ, as the light of the world, early in the morning. In him the day spring from on high has visited the world; and happy are we, for ever happy, if that *day-star arise in our hearts.*

We have here an account of the second day's work, the creation of the firmament, in which observe,

1. The command of God concerning it: *Let there be a firmament, an expansion,* so the Hebrew word signifies, like a sheet spread, or a curtain drawn out. This includes all that is visible above the earth, between it and the third heavens: the air, its higher, middle, and lower, regions--the celestial globe, and all the spheres and orbs of light above: it reaches as high as the place where the stars are fixed, for that is called here the *firmament of heaven* [#Ge 1:14,15](#), and as low as the place where the birds fly, for that also is called the *firmament of heaven*, [#Ge 1:20](#). When God had made the light, he appointed the air to be the receptacle and vehicle of its beams, and to be as a medium of communication between the invisible and the visible world; for, though between heaven and earth there is an inconceivable distance, yet there is not an impassable gulf, as there is between heaven and hell. This firmament is not a wall of partition, but a way of intercourse. See [#Job 26:7; 37:18; #Ps 104:3; Am 9:6](#).
2. The creation of it. Lest it should seem as if God had only commanded it to be done, and some one else had done it, he adds, *And God made the firmament.* What God requires of us he himself works in us, or it is not done. He that commands faith, holiness, and love, creates them by the power of his grace going along with his word, that he may have all the praise. *Lord, give what thou commandest, and then command what thou pleasest.* The firmament is said to be *the work of God's fingers*, [#Ps 8:3](#). Though the vastness of its extent declares it to be the work of his arm stretched out, yet the admirable fineness of its constitution shows that it is a curious piece of art, the work of his fingers.
3. The use and design of it--to *divide the waters from the waters*, that is, to distinguish between the waters that are wrapped up in the clouds and those that cover the sea, the water in the air and those in the earth. See the difference between these two carefully observed, [#De 11:10,11](#), where Canaan is upon this account preferred to Egypt, that Egypt was moistened and made fruitful with the waters that are under the firmament, but Canaan with waters from above, out of the firmament, even the dew of heaven, which tarrieth not *for the sons of men*, [#Mic 5:7](#). God has, in the firmament of his power, chambers, store chambers, whence he *watereth the earth*, [#Ps 104:13; 65:9,10](#). He has also *treasures, or magazines, of snow and hail, which he hath reserved against the day of battle and war*, [#Job 38:22,23](#). O what a great God is he who has thus provided for the comfort of all that serve him and the confusion of all that hate him! It is good having him our friend, and bad having him our enemy.
4. The naming of it: *He called the firmament heaven.* It is the visible heaven, the pavement of the holy city; above the firmament God is said to have his throne ([#Eze 1:26](#)), for he has prepared it in the heavens; the heavens therefore are said to rule,

**#Da 4:26. Is not God in the height of heaven? #Job 22:12.** Yes, he is, and we should be led by the contemplation of the heavens that are in our eye to consider *our Father who is in heaven*. The height of the heavens should remind us of God's supremacy and the infinite distance there is between us and him; the brightness of the heavens and their purity should remind us of his glory, and majesty, and perfect holiness; the vastness of the heavens, their encompassing of the earth, and the influence they have upon it, should remind us of his immensity and universal providence.

The third day's work is related in these verses--the forming of the sea and the dry land, and the making of the earth fruitful. Hitherto the power of the Creator had been exerted and employed about the upper part of the visible world; the light of heaven was kindled, and the firmament of heaven fixed: but now he descends to this lower world, the earth, which was designed for the children of men, designed both for their habitation and for their maintenance; and here we have an account of the fitting of it for both, and building of their house and the spreading of their table.

Observe,

- I. How the earth was prepared to be a habitation for man, by the gathering of the waters together, and the making of the dry land to appear. Thus, instead of the confusion which there was (**#Ge 1:2**) when earth and water were mixed in one great mass, behold, now, there is order, by such a separation as rendered them both useful. God Said, *let it be so*, and it was so; no sooner said than done.
  1. The waters which had covered the earth were ordered to retire, and to gather into one place, namely, those hollows which were fitted and appointed for their reception and rest. The waters, thus cleared, thus collected, and thus lodged, in their proper place, he called seas. Though they are many, in distant regions, and washing several shores, yet, either above ground or under ground, they have communication with each other, and so they are one, and the common receptacle of waters, into which all the rivers flow, **#Ec 1:7**. Waters and seas often, in scripture, signify troubles and afflictions, **#Ps 42:7; Ps 69:2,14,15**. God's own people are not exempted from these in this world; but it is their comfort that they are only waters under the heaven (there are none in heaven), and that they are all in the place that God has appointed them and within the bounds that he has set for them. How the waters were gathered together at first, and how they are still bound and limited by the same Almighty hand that first confined them, are elegantly described, **#Ps 104:6-9**, and are there mentioned as matter of praise. *Those that go down to the sea in ships* ought to acknowledge daily the wisdom, power, and goodness, of the Creator, in making the great waters serviceable to man for trade and commerce; and *those that tarry at home* must own themselves indebted to him that keeps the sea with bars and doors in its decreed place, and stays its proud waves, **#Job 38:10,11**.
  2. The dry land was made to appear, and emerge out of the waters, and was called *earth*, and *given to the children of men*. The earth, it seems, was in being before; but it was of no use, because it was under water. Thus many of God's gifts are received in vain, because they are buried; make them to appear, and they become serviceable. We who, to this day, enjoy the benefit of the dry land (though, since this, it was once deluged, and dried again) must own ourselves tenants to, and dependents upon, that God whose *hands formed the dry land*, **#Ps 95:5; Jon 1:9**.
- II. How the earth was furnished for the maintenance and support of man, **#Ge 1:11,12**. Present provision was now made, by the immediate products of the upstart earth, which, in obedience to God's command, was no sooner made than it became fruitful,

and brought forth grass for the cattle and herb for the service of man. Provision was likewise made for time to come, by the perpetuating of the several kinds of vegetables, which are numerous, various, and all curious, and every one *having its seed in itself after its kind*, that, during the continuance of man upon the earth, food might be fetched out of the earth for his use and benefit. *Lord, what is man, that he is thus visited and regarded* --that such care should be taken, and such provision made, for the support and preservation of those guilty and obnoxious lives which have been a thousand times forfeited!

Observe here,

1. That not only the earth is the Lord's, *but the fulness thereof*, and he is the rightful owner and sovereign disposer, not only of it, but of all its furniture. The earth was *emptiness*, (#Ge 1:2), but now, by a word's speaking, it has become full of God's riches, and his they are still--*his corn and his wine, his wool and his flax*, #Ho 2:9. Though the use of them is allowed to us, the property still remains in him, and to his service and honour they must be used.
2. That common providence is a continued creation, and in it *our Father worketh hitherto*. The earth still remains under the efficacy of this command, to bring forth grass, and herbs, and its annual products; and though, being according to the common course of nature, these are not standing miracles, yet they are standing instances of the unwearied power and unexhausted goodness of the world's great Maker and Master.
3. That though God, ordinarily, makes use of the agency of second causes, according to their nature, yet he neither needs them nor is tied to them; for, though the precious fruits of the earth are usually brought forth by the influences of the sun and moon, (#De 33:14), yet here we find the earth bearing a great abundance of fruit, probably ripe fruit, before the sun and moon were made.
4. That it is good to provide things necessary before we have occasion to use them: before the beasts and man were made, here were grass and herbs prepared for them. God thus dealt wisely and graciously with man; let not man then be foolish and unwise for himself.
5. That God must have the glory of all the benefit we receive from the products of the earth, either for food or physic. It is he that *hears the heavens when they hear the earth*, #Ho 2:21,22. And if we have, through grace, an interest in him who is the fountain, when the streams are dried up and the *fig tree doth not blossom* we may rejoice in him.

This is the history of the fourth day's work, the creating of the sun, moon, and stars, which are here accounted for, not as they are in themselves and in their own nature, to satisfy the curious, but as they are in relation to this earth, to which they serve as lights; and this is enough to furnish us with matter for praise and thanksgiving. Holy Job mentions this as an instance of the glorious power of God, that *by the Spirit he hath garnished the heavens*, (#Job 26:13); and here we have an account of that garniture which is not only so much the beauty of the upper world, but so much the blessing of this lower; for though heaven is high, yet has it respect to this earth, and therefore should have respect from it. Of the creation of the lights of heaven we have an account,

- I. In general, #Ge 1:14,15, where we have

1. The command given concerning them: *Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven.* God had said, *Let there be light,* (#Ge 1:3), and there was light; but this was, as it were, a chaos of light, scattered and confused: now it was collected and modelled, and made into several luminaries, and so rendered both more glorious and more serviceable. God is the God of order, and not of confusion; and, as he is light, so he is the Father and former of lights. Those lights were to be *in the firmament of heaven*, that vast expanse which encloses the earth, and is conspicuous to all; for *no man, when he has lighted a candle, puts it under a bushel, but on a candlestick,* (#Lu 8:16), and a stately golden candlestick the firmament of heaven is, from which these candles give light to *all that are in the house*. The firmament itself is spoken of as having a brightness of its own (#Da 12:3), but this was not sufficient to give light to the earth; and perhaps for this reason it is not expressly said of the second day's work, in which the firmament was made, that it was good, because, till it was adorned with these lights on the fourth day, it had not become serviceable to man.

2. The use they were intended to be of to this earth.

(1.) They must be for the distinction of times, of day and night, summer and winter, which are interchanged by the motion of the sun, whose rising makes day, his setting night, his approach towards our tropic summer, his recess to the other winter: and thus, *under the sun, there is a season to every purpose,* #Ec 3:1.

(2.) They must be for the direction of actions. They are for signs of the change of weather, that the husbandman may order his affairs with discretion, foreseeing, by the face of the sky, when second causes have begun to work, whether it will be fair or foul, #Mt 16:2,3.

They do also *give light upon the earth*, that we may *walk,* (#Joh 11:9), and *work,* (#Joh 9:4), according as the duty of every day requires. The lights of heaven do not shine for themselves, nor for the world of spirits above, who need them not; but they shine for us, for our pleasure and advantage. Lord, what is man, that he should be thus regarded! #Ps 8:3,4. How ungrateful and inexcusable are we, if, when God has set up these lights for us to work by, we sleep, or play, or trifle away the time of business, and neglect the great work we were sent into the world about! The lights of heaven are made to serve us, and they do it faithfully, and shine in their season, without fail: but we are set as lights in this world to serve God; and do we in like manner answer the end of our creation? No, we do not, our light does not shine before God as his lights shine before us, #Mt 5:14. We burn our Master's candles, but do not mind our Master's work.

II. In particular,

1. Observe, the lights of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars; and all these are the work of God's hands.

(1.) The sun is the greatest light of all, more than a million times greater than the earth, and the most glorious and useful of all the lamps of heaven, a noble instance of the Creator's wisdom, power, and goodness, and an invaluable blessing to the creatures of this lower world. Let us learn from #Ps 19:1-6 how to give unto God the glory due unto his name, as the Maker of the sun.

(2.) The moon is a less light, and yet is here reckoned one of the greater lights, because though, in regard to its magnitude and borrowed light, it is inferior to many of the stars, yet, by virtue of its office, as ruler of the night, and in respect of its usefulness to the earth, it is more excellent than they. Those are most valuable that are most serviceable; and

those are the greater lights, not that have the best gifts, but that humbly and faithfully do the most good with them. *Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister,* #Mt 20:26.

(3.) He made the stars also, which are here spoken of as they appear to vulgar eyes, without distinguishing between the planets and the fixed stars, or accounting for their number, nature, place, magnitude, motions, or influences; for the scriptures were written, not to gratify our curiosity and make us astronomers, but to lead us to God, and make us saints. Now these lights are said to *rule*, (#Ge 1:16,18); not that they have a supreme dominion, as God has, but they are deputy governors, rulers under him. Here the less light, the moon, is said to rule *the night*; but in #Ps 136:9 the stars are mentioned as sharers in that government; *The moon and stars to rule by night*. No more is meant than that they *give light*, #Jer 31:35. The best and most honourable way of ruling is by giving light and doing good: those command respect that live a useful life, and so shine as lights.

## 2. Learn from all this,

(1.) The sin and folly of that ancient idolatry, the worshipping of the sun, moon, and stars, which, some think, took rise, or countenance at least, from some broken traditions in the patriarchal age concerning the rule and dominion of the lights of heaven. But the account here given of them plainly shows that they are both God's creatures and man's servants; and therefore it is both a great affront to God and a great reproach to ourselves to make deities of them and give them divine honours. See #De 4:19.

(2.) The duty and wisdom of daily worshipping that God who made all these things, and made them to be that to us which they are. The revolutions of the day and night oblige us to offer the solemn sacrifice of prayer and praise every morning and evening.

Each day, hitherto, has produced very noble and excellent beings, which we can never sufficiently admire; but we do not read of the creation of any living creature till the fifth day, of which these verses give us an account. The work of creation not only proceeded gradually from one thing to another, but rose and advanced gradually from that which was less excellent to that which was more so, teaching us to press towards perfection and endeavour that our last works may be our best works. It was on the fifth day that the fish and fowl were created, and both out of the waters. Though there is one kind of flesh of fishes, and another of birds, yet they were made together, and both out of the waters; for the power of the first Cause can produce very different effects from the same second causes.

## Observe,

1. The making of the fish and fowl, at first, #Ge 1:20,21. God commanded them to be produced. He said,

*"Let the waters bring forth abundantly; not as if the waters had any productive power of their own, but, Let them be brought into being, the fish in the waters and the fowl out of them."*

This command he himself executed: *God created great whales, &c.* Insects, which perhaps are as various and as numerous as any species of animals, and their structure as curious, were part of this day's work, some of them being allied to the fish and others to the fowl. Mr. Boyle (I remember) says he admires the Creator's wisdom and power as much in an ant as in an elephant. Notice is here taken of the various sorts of fish and fowl, each after their

kind, and of the great numbers of both that were produced, for the waters brought forth abundantly; and particular mention is made of great whales, the largest of fishes, whose bulk and strength, exceeding that of any other animal, are remarkable proofs of the power and greatness of the Creator. The express notice here taken of the whale, above all the rest, seems sufficient to determine what animal is meant by the Leviathan, **#Job 41:1**. The curious formation of the bodies of animals, their different sizes, shapes, and natures, with the admirable powers of the sensitive life with which they are endued, when duly considered, serve, not only to silence and shame the objections of atheists and infidels, but to raise high thoughts and high praises of God in pious and devout souls, **#Ps 104:25**, &c.

2. The blessing of them, in order to their continuance. Life is a wasting thing. Its strength is not the strength of stones. It is a candle that will burn out, if it be not first blown out; and therefore the wise Creator not only made the individuals, but provided for the propagation of the several kinds; *God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply*, **#Ge 1:22**. God will bless his own works, and not forsake them; and *what he does shall be for a perpetuity*, **#Ec 3:14**. The power of God's providence preserves all things, as at first his creating power produced them. Fruitfulness is the effect of God's blessing and must be ascribed to it; the multiplying of the fish and fowl, from year to year, is still the fruit of this blessing. Well, let us give to God the glory of the continuance of these creatures to this day for the benefit of man. See **#Job 12:7,9**. It is a pity that fishing and fowling, recreations innocent in themselves, should ever be abused to divert any from God and their duty, while they are capable of being improved to lead us to the contemplation of the wisdom, power, and goodness, of him that made all these things, and to engage us to stand in awe of him, as the fish and fowl do of us.

We have here the first part of the sixth day's work. The sea was, the day before, replenished with its fish, and the air with its fowl; and this day were made the beasts of the earth, the cattle, and the creeping things that pertain to the earth. Here, as before,

1. *The Lord gave the word; he said, Let the earth bring forth*, not as if the earth had any such prolific virtue as to produce these animals, or as if God resigned his creating power to it; but,

*"Let these creatures now come into being upon the earth, and out of it, in their respective kinds, conformable to the ideas of them in the divine counsels concerning their creation."*

2. He also did the work; he made them all after their kind, not only of divers shapes, but of divers natures, manners, food, and fashions--some to be tame about the house, others to be wild in the fields--some living upon grass and herbs, others upon flesh--some harmless, and others ravenous--some bold, and others timorous--some for man's service, and not his sustenance, as the horse--others for his sustenance, and not his service, as the sheep--others for both, as the ox--and some for neither, as the wild beasts. In all this appears the manifold wisdom of the Creator.

We have here the second part of the sixth day's work, the creation of man, which we are, in a special manner, concerned to take notice of, that we may know ourselves. Observe,

- I. That man was made last of all the creatures, that it might not be suspected that he had been, any way, a helper to God in the creation of the world: that question must be for ever humbling and mortifying to him, *Where wast thou*, or any of thy kind, *when I laid the foundations of the earth?* **#Job 38:4**. Yet it was both an honour and a favour to him that he was made last: an honour, for the method of the creation was to advance

from that which was less perfect to that which was more so; and a favour, for it was not fit he should be lodged in the palace designed for him till it was completely fitted up and furnished for his reception. Man, as soon as he was made, had the whole visible creation before him, both to contemplate and to take the comfort of. Man was made the same day that the beasts were, because his body was made of the same earth with theirs; and, while he is in the body, he inhabits the same earth with them. God forbid that by indulging the body and the desires of it we should make ourselves like the beasts that perish!

- II. That man's creation was a more signal and immediate act of divine wisdom and power than that of the other creatures. The narrative of it is introduced with something of solemnity, and a manifest distinction from the rest. Hitherto, it had been said,

*"Let there be light," and "Let there be a firmament," and "Let the earth, or waters, bring forth"*

such a thing; but now the word of command is turned into a word of consultation,

*"Let us make man, for whose sake the rest of the creatures were made: this is a work we must take into our own hands."*

In the former he speaks as one having authority, in this as one having affection; for his *delights were with the sons of men*, [#Pr 8:31](#). It should seem as if this were the work which he longed to be at; as if he had said,

*"Having at last settled the preliminaries, let us now apply ourselves to the business, Let us make man."*

Man was to be a creature different from all that had been hitherto made. Flesh and spirit, heaven and earth, must be put together in him, and he must be allied to both worlds. And therefore God himself not only undertakes to make him, but is pleased so to express himself as if he called a council to consider of the making of him: *Let us make man*. The three persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, consult about it and concur in it, because man, when he was made, was to be dedicated and devoted to Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Into that great name we are, with good reason, baptized, for to that great name we owe our being. Let him rule man who said, *Let us make man*.

- III. That man was made in God's image and after his likeness, two words to express the same thing and making each other the more expressive; *image* and *likeness* denote the likeliest image, the nearest resemblance of any of the visible creatures. Man was not made in the likeness of any creature that went before him, but in the likeness of his Creator; yet still between God and man there is an infinite distance. Christ only is the *express* image of God's person, as the Son of his Father, having the same nature. It is only some of God's honour that is put upon man, who is God's image only as the shadow in the glass, or the king's impress upon the coin. God's image upon man consists in these three things:--

1. In his nature and constitution, not those of his body (for God has not a body), but those of his soul. This honour indeed God has put upon the body of man, that the Word was made flesh, the Son of God was clothed with a body like ours and will shortly clothe ours with a glory like that of his. And this we may safely say, That he by whom God made the worlds, not only the great world, but man the little world, formed the human body, at the first, according to the platform he designed for himself in the

fulness of time. But it is the soul, the great soul, of man, that does especially bear God's image. The soul is a spirit, an intelligent immortal spirit, an influencing active spirit, herein resembling God, the Father of Spirits, and the soul of the world. *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.* The soul of man, considered in its three noble faculties, understanding, will, and active power, is perhaps the brightest clearest looking glass in nature, wherein to see God.

2. In his place and authority: *Let us make man in our image, and let him have dominion.* As he has the government of the inferior creatures, he is, as it were, God's representative, or viceroy, upon earth; they are not capable of fearing and serving God, therefore God has appointed them to fear and serve man. Yet his government of himself by the freedom of his will has in it more of God's image than his government of the creatures.
3. In his purity and rectitude. God's image upon man consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, [#Eph 4:24](#); [Col 3:10](#). He was upright, [#Ec 7:29](#). He had an habitual conformity of all his natural powers to the whole will of God. His understanding saw divine things clearly and truly, and there were no errors nor mistakes in his knowledge. His will complied readily and universally with the will of God, without reluctance or resistance. His affections were all regular, and he had no inordinate appetites or passions. His thoughts were easily brought and fixed to the best subjects, and there was no vanity nor ungovernableness in them. All the inferior powers were subject to the dictates and directions of the superior, without any mutiny or rebellion. Thus holy, thus happy, were our first parents, in having the image of God upon them. And this honour, put upon man at first, is a good reason why we should not speak ill one of another ([#Jas 3:9](#)), nor do ill one to another ([#Ge 9:6](#)), and a good reason why we should not debase ourselves to the service of sin, and why we should devote ourselves to God's service. But how art thou fallen, O son of the morning! How is this image of God upon man defaced! How small are the remains of it, and how great the ruins of it! The Lord renew it upon our souls by his sanctifying grace!
- IV. That man was made male and female, and blessed with the blessing of fruitfulness and increase. God said, *Let us make man*, and immediately it follows, *So God created man*; he performed what he resolved. With us saying and doing are two things; but they are not so with God. He created him male and female, Adam and Eve--Adam first, out of earth, and Eve out of his side, Genesis 2. It should seem that of the rest of the creatures God made many couples, but of man *did not he make one?* ([#Mal 2:15](#)), though he had the residue of the Spirit, whence Christ gathers an argument against divorce, [#Mt 19:4,5](#). Our first father, Adam, was confined to one wife; and, if he had put her away, there was no other for him to marry, which plainly intimated that the bond of marriage was not to be dissolved at pleasure. Angels were not made male and female, for they were not to propagate their kind, ([#Lu 20:34-36](#)); but man was made so, that the nature might be propagated and the race continued. Fires and candles, the luminaries of this lower world, because they waste, and go out, have a power to light more; but it is not so with the lights of heaven: stars do not kindle stars. God made but one male and one female, that all the nations of men might know themselves to be made of one blood, descendants from one common stock, and might thereby be induced to love one another. God, having made them capable of transmitting the nature they had received, said to them, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*

Here he gave them,

1. A large inheritance: *Replenish the earth*; it is this that is bestowed upon the children of men. They were made to  *dwell upon the face of all the earth*, #Ac 17:26. This is the place in which God has set man to be the servant of his providence in the government of the inferior creatures, and, as it were, the intelligence of this orb; to be the receiver of God's bounty, which other creatures live upon, but do not know it; to be likewise the collector of his praises in this lower world, and to pay them into the exchequer above #Ps 145:10; and, lastly, to be a probationer for a better state.
2. A numerous lasting family, to enjoy this inheritance, pronouncing a blessing upon them, in virtue of which their posterity should extend to the utmost corners of the earth and continue to the utmost period of time. Fruitfulness and increase depend upon the blessing of God: Obededom had eight sons, *for God blessed him*, #1Ch 26:5. It is owing to this blessing, which God commanded at first, that the race of mankind is still in being, and that as *one generation passeth away another cometh*.

V. That God gave to man, when he had made him, a dominion *over the inferior creatures, over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air*. Though man provides for neither, he has power over both, much more *over every living thing that moveth upon the earth*, which are more under his care and within his reach. God designed hereby to put an honour upon man, that he might find himself the more strongly obliged to bring honour to his Maker. This dominion is very much diminished and lost by the fall; yet God's providence continues so much of it to the children of men as is necessary to the safety and support of their lives, and God's grace has given to the saints a new and better title to the creature than that which was forfeited by sin; for all is ours if we are Christ's, #1Co 3:22.

We have here the third part of the sixth day's work, which was not any new creation, but a gracious provision of food for all flesh, #Ps 136:25. He that made man and beast thus took care to preserve both, #Ps 36:6.

Here is,

- I. Food provided for man, #Ge 1:29. Herbs and fruits must be his meat, including corn and all the products of the earth; these were allowed him, but (it should seem) not flesh, till after the flood, #Ge 9:3. And before the earth was deluged, much more before it was cursed for man's sake, its fruits, no doubt, were more pleasing to the taste and more strengthening and nourishing to the body than marrow and fatness, and all the portion of the king's meat, are now.

See here,

1. That which should make us humble. As we were made out of the earth, so we are maintained out of it. Once indeed men did eat angels' food, bread from heaven; but they died (#Joh 6:49); it was to them but as food out of the earth, #Ps 104:14. There is meat that endures to everlasting life; the Lord evermore give us this.
2. That which should make us thankful. The Lord is for the body; from him we receive all the supports and comforts of this life, and to him we must give thanks. He gives us all things richly to enjoy, not only for necessity, but plenty, plenty, dainties, and varieties, for ornament and delight. How much are we indebted! How careful should we be, as we live upon God's bounty, to live to his glory!
3. That which should make us temperate and content with our lot. Though Adam had dominion given him over fish and fowl, yet God confined him, in his food, to herbs and fruits; and he never complained of it. Though afterwards he coveted forbidden

fruit, for the sake of the wisdom and knowledge he promised himself from it, yet we never read that he coveted forbidden flesh. If God give us food for our lives, let us not, with murmuring Israel, ask food for our lusts, [#Ps 78:18](#); see [#Da 1:15](#).

- II. Food provided for the beasts, [#Ge 1:30](#). *Doth God take care for oxen?* Yes, certainly, he provides food convenient for them, and not for oxen only, which were used in his sacrifices and man's service, but even the young lions and the young ravens are the care of his providence; they ask and have their meat from God. Let us give to God the glory of his bounty to the inferior creatures, that all are fed, as it were, at his table, every day. He is a great housekeeper, a very rich and bountiful one, that satisfies the desire of every living thing. Let this encourage God's people to cast their care upon him, and not to be solicitous respecting what they shall eat and what they shall drink. He that provided for Adam without his care, and still provides for all the creatures without their care, will not let those that trust him want any good thing, [#Mt 6:26](#). He that feeds his birds will not starve his babes.

We have here the approbation and conclusion of the whole work of creation. As for God, his work is perfect; and if he begin he will also make an end, in providence and grace, as well as here in creation. Observe,

- I. The review God took of his work: He *saw every thing that he had made*. So he does still; all the works of his hands are under his eye. He that made all sees all; he that made us sees us, [#Ps 139:1-16](#). Omniscience cannot be separated from omnipotence. *Known unto God are all his works*, [#Ac 15:18](#). But this was the Eternal Mind's solemn reflection upon the copies of its own wisdom and the products of its own power. God has hereby set us an example of reviewing our works. Having given us a power of reflection, he expects we should use that power, see our way, ([#Jer 2:23](#)), and think of it, [#Ps 119:59](#). When we have finished a day's work, and are entering upon the rest of the night, we should commune with our own hearts about what we have been doing that day; so likewise when we have finished a week's work, and are entering upon the sabbath rest, we should thus prepare to meet our God; and when we are finishing our life's work, and are entering upon our rest in the grave, that is a time to bring to remembrance, that we may die repenting, and so take leave of it.
- II. The complacency God took in his work. When we come to review our works we find, to our shame, that much has been very bad; but, when God reviewed his, all was very good. He did not pronounce it good till he had seen it so, to teach us not to answer a matter before we hear it. The work of creation was a very good work. All that God made was well made, and there was no flaw nor defect in it.
  1. It was good. Good, for it is all agreeable to the mind of the Creator, just as he would have it to be; when the transcript came to be compared with the great original, it was found to be exact, no errata in it, not one misplaced stroke. Good, for it answers the end of its creation, and is fit for the purpose for which it was designed. Good, for it is serviceable to man, whom God had appointed lord of the visible creation. Good, for it is all for God's glory; there is that in the whole visible creation which is a demonstration of God's being and perfections, and which tends to beget, in the soul of man, a religious regard to him and veneration of him.
  2. It was very good. Of each day's work (except the second) it was said that it was good, but now, it is very good.

For,

(1.) Now man was made, who was the chief of the ways of God, who was designed to be the visible image of the Creator's glory and the mouth of the creation in his praises.

(2.) Now all was made; every part was good, but all together very good. The glory and goodness, the beauty and harmony, of God's works, both of providence and grace, as this of creation, will best appear when they are perfected. When the top-stone is brought forth we shall cry, *Grace, grace, unto it*, #Zec 4:7. Therefore judge nothing before the time.

III. The time when this work was concluded: *The evening and the morning were the sixth day*; so that in six days God made the world. We are not to think but that God could have made the world in an instant. He said that, *Let there be light, and there was light*, could have said,

*"Let there be a world,"*

and there would have been a world, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*, as at the resurrection, #1Co 15:52. But he did it in six days, that he might show himself a free-agent, doing his own work both in his own way and in his own time,--that his wisdom, power, and goodness, might appear to us, and be meditated upon by us, the more distinctly,--and that he might set us an example of working six days and resting the seventh; it is therefore made the reason of the fourth commandment. So much would the sabbath conduce to the keeping up of religion in the world that God had an eye to it in the timing of his creation. And now, as God reviewed his work, let us review our meditations upon it, and we shall find them very lame and defective, and our praises low and flat; let us therefore stir up ourselves, and all that is within us, to *worship him that made the heaven, earth, and sea, and the fountains of waters*, according to the tenour of the everlasting gospel, which is preached to every nation, #Re 14:6,7. All his works, in all places of his dominion, do bless him; and, therefore, *bless thou the Lord, O my soul!*