

LECTURE III.

ROMANS XI. 36. *Of HIM, and through HIM, and to HIM, are all things ; to whom be glory for ever.*

SOME of the most important positions affirmed in the preceding lecture could not fail to be perceived by my attentive hearers, to be at variance with certain sentiments or interpretations, which are extensively received under the supposition of their being declared, or at least implied, in the Holy Scriptures. It is now my duty to state, in particular detail, what those sentiments and opinions are ; and in what manner they stand in contradiction to the facts in the natural history of the earth, to which we have adverted.

My auditors will do me the favour to observe, that I speak of opinions and *interpretations* ; the sentiments which *men have taken up*, and promulgated as the declarations of the Bible. We have not yet arrived at the part of these lectures in which we shall have to examine whether those interpretations are the genuine sense of the divine oracles. It would not be proper to anticipate that inquiry : yet I cannot but be anxious that my friends should keep constantly in mind the avowal made in the first lecture : namely, my conviction that *those interpretations are erroneous*. I solicit this favour as a protection to myself from being understood, in this and the following lecture, to cast any doubt upon the truth and authority of the Scriptures. It is not the word of God, but the expositions and deductions of men, from which I am compelled to dissent.

I. It is a prevailing opinion that the dependent universe, in all its extent, was brought into existence by the