

THE HEART OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN, TOWARDS SINNERS ON EARTH

THE INTRODUCTION

JOHN 13: 1

“When JESUS knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of the world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them to the end.”

HAVING, in the former treatise, set forth our Lord in all those solemn actions of his, his obedience unto death, his resurrection, ascension into heaven, his sitting at God's right hand, and intercession for us; I shall now annex this discourse, which lays open the Heart of CHRIST, as now he is in heaven, sitting at God's right hand, and interceding for us; how it is affected, and graciously disposed towards sinners on earth that come to him; how willing to receive them; how ready to entertain them; how tender to pity them in all their infirmities.

The use whereof will be this: to encourage sinners to come more boldly unto the throne of grace, unto such a Savior and High-priest, when they shall know how tenderly his heart (though he is now in his glory) is inclined towards them; and so to remove that great stone of stumbling which we meet with, (and lieth unseen) in the thoughts of men, that CHRIST being now exalted to so high a distance of glory, as to sit at God's right hand, they cannot tell how to treat with him about their salvation so freely, as those poor sinners did, who were here on earth with him. Had our lot been, (think they) but to have conversed with him, (in the days of his flesh) as Mary and Peter, and his other disciples did here below, we could have been bold with him, and have had any thing at his hands; for they beheld him before them, a man like unto them-selves, and full of meekness and gentleness, he being then himself sensible of all sorts of miseries; but now he is gone into a far country, and has put on glory and immortality. The drift of this discourse is therefore to ascertain poor souls, that his heart remains the same it was on earth; that he intercedes there with the same heart he did here below; and that he is as meek, as gentle, as easy to be entreated, and as tender in his bowels; so that they may deal with him as fairly about the great matter of their salvation, and upon as easy terms obtain it of him, as they might if they had been on earth with him: than which, nothing can be more for the comfort of those whose souls pursue after strong and entire communion with CHRIST.

Now the demonstrations that may help our faith in this, I reduce to two heads: the one gathering, that it is so; the other, the reasons and grounds why it must needs be so. The first are taken from several passages, in those several conditions of his, at his last farewell before his death, his resurrection, ascension, and now he is sitting at God's right hand. I shall lead you through all the same heads which I have gone over in the former treatise, (though to another purpose) and take such observations from his speeches and carriage, in all those states he went through, as shall tend directly to persuade our hearts of the point in hand; namely, that now he is in heaven, his heart remains as graciously inclined to sinners that come to him, as ever on earth. And for a ground, or introduction to the first, I shall take the Scripture above set down; for those other, another Scripture.

SECT. 1

Demonstrations of Christ's Love to Sinners now, from his last Farewell to his Disciples.

IT was long before CHRIST brake his mind to his disciples, that he was to go away to heaven from them; but when he begins to acquaint them with it, he at once leaves with them an abundance of his heart, and that not only how it stood towards them, at the present, but what it would be when he should be in his glory. Let us, to this end, but briefly peruse his last carriage, and his last supper, as it is recorded by the evangelist John; and we shall find this to be the drift of those long discourses, from the 13th to the 18th chapter.

The words which I have prefixed as the text, are the preface unto all that discourse, and show the argument and sum of all. The preface is this; " Before the feast of the passover, when JESUS knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, —Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from GOD, and went to GOD, he then washed his disciples' feet." Now this pre-face was prefixed by the evangelist, on purpose to set open a window into CHRIST's heart, to show what it was. at his departure, and to give a light into all that follows.

1. He premiseth what was in CHRIST's thoughts: he began deeply to consider, both that he was to depart out of this world, and that he should shortly be installed into that glory which was due unto him; so it follows, ver. 3, JESUS " knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands," (that is, that all power in heaven and earth was his) in the midst of these thoughts, went and washed his disciples' feet.

What was CHRIST's heart most upon, in the midst of all these elevated meditations Not upon his own glory so much, (though it is told us he considered that, thereby the more to set out his love unto us) but his heart ran out in love towards his own: " Having loved his own," says the first verse, 7ss miss, a word denoting the greatest nearness, dearness, and intimateness founded upon propriety: all believers are CHRIST's own, a piece of himself, his own members, his own flesh. And he considers, that though he was to go out of the world, yet they were to be in the world; and therefore it is added, " which were in the world;" that is, to remain in this world. He had others of his own who were in that world, unto which he was going, even the " spirits of just men made perfect;" but he takes more care for his own, who were to remain here in this world, a world wherein there is much evil, both of sin and misery. This is it, which draws out his bowels towards them, even when his heart was full of the thoughts of his own glory: " having loved his own, he loved them unto the end," or for ever. So that the scope of this speech is to show how CHRIST's heart and love would be towards them even for ever, when he should be gone unto his Father, as well as it was to show how it had been here on earth. And to testify what his love would be to them, when in heaven, the evangelist skews, that when he was in the midst of all those great thoughts of his approaching glory, he then took water and a towel, and washed his disciples' feet. And what was CHRIST's meaning in this, but that, whereas when he was in heaven, he could not make such outward visible demonstrations of his heart, by doing such mean services for them; therefore by doing this in the midst of such thoughts of his glory, he would show what he could be content, as it were, to do for them, when he should be in full possession of it

This declaration of his mind, we have from his carriage, at this his last farewell. Let us next take a survey of the drift of that which he made at that his farewell discourse, and we shall find the main scope of it to be, further to assure his disciples of what his heart would be unto them. And as what he prayed for them, was for all believers, so also was that which he spoke unto them.

First, he lets them see what his heart would be unto them, when in heaven, by that business which he went thither to perform for them: " I go to send you a Comforter," whilst you are in this world, and to " prepare a place for you," John 14: 2, when you go out of this world. " There are many mansions in my Father's house," and I go to take them up for you: " If it had been otherwise," says he, " I would have told you." Whom would not this openness of heart persuade But then, the business itself being so much for our happiness; how much more does that argue it And indeed, CHRIST himself does fetch from thence an argument of the continuance of his love to them. So, ver. 3, " If I

go to prepare a place for you," then doubt not of my love when I am there: all the glory of the place shall never make me forget my business. When he was on earth, he forgot none of the business for which he came into the world; and now he is gone to heaven, he is entered as a forerunner to take up places there for us: and therefore, I Pet. 1: 4, salvation is said to " be reserved in heaven for us."

And further to manifest his mindfulness of them, and of all believers, when he should be in his glory, he tells them, that when he has despatched that business for them, he meant to come again to them: so chap. 14: 3, " If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again." Love descends better than ascends; and so does the love of CHRIST, who indeed is love itself; and therefore comes down to us himself: "And receive you unto myself," says CHRIST, " that so where I am, you may be also." And yet further, the more to express the longings of his heart after them all during that time, he tells them it shall not be long neither ere he does come again to them. So John 16: 16, " Again a little while and ye shall see me; a little while and ye shall not see me:" which not seeing him, refers not to that small space of absence whilst dead in the grave; but to that after his ascending, when he should go away, not to be seen on earth again until the day of judgment.

Thirdly, what his heart would be towards them in his absence, he expresseth by the careful provision he would make for their comfort in his absence. John 14: 18, " I will not leave you as orphans:" (so the word is,) I will not leave you like fatherless and friendless children. My Father and I have only One, who lies in the bosom of us both, and proceeds from us both; the Holy Ghost, and in the mean time I will send him to you. Ver. 16, " I will pray the Father," says he, " and he shall give you another Comforter." And chap. 16: 7, he says, " I will send him to you." And he shall be a better Comforter unto you than I am to be in this dispensation. " It is expedient that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come;" who by reason of his office, will comfort you better than I should do with my bodily presence. And this Spirit, as he is the earnest of heaven, so he is the greatest token and pledge of my love that ever was. And all the comfort he shall speak to you all that while, will be but the expression of my heart towards you. For as he comes not of himself, but " I must send him," John 16: 7; so " he will speak nothing of himself," but "whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak," ver. 13.

And ver. 14, "he shall receive of mine, and shall chew it unto you." Him therefore I shall send on purpose to be in my room, and he shall tell you (if you listen to him, and not grieve him) nothing but my love. " He shall glorify me," namely, to you, (for I am in myself already glorified in heaven.) All his speech in your hearts will be to advance me,

and my love unto you; and it will be his delight to do it. And he will continually be breaking your hearts, either with my love to you, or yours to me, or both. And whereas you have the Spirit now, " He now dwells with you:" and " at that day (ver. 20,) you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you:" he will tell you when I am in heaven, that there is as true conjunction between me and you, as is between my Father and me.

If this were not enough to assure them how his heart would be affected towards them, he assures them he will give them daily experience of it. " Hitherto you have asked nothing," (that is, but little) " in my name, but now ask and you shall receive." And if otherwise you will not believe, " believe me," says he, " for the works' sake," John 14: 11. He speaks here of the works he would do for them, in answer to their prayers when he was gone; for it follows, ver. 12, " He that believeth on me shall do greater works than I, because I go to my Father." So that it is manifest, he speaks of the works clone after his ascension. And how were they to procure them to be done By prayer: so it follows, ver. 13, " And whatsoever you ask in my name, that will I do." He speaks it of the time when he is gone. And again, ver. 14, " If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it; as if he had said, though you ask the Father in my name, yet all comes through my hands, and " I will do it." Yet further to evidence his love, he not only bids them pray to him, and in his name upon all occasions, but assurcth them, that he himself will pray for them. It is the chief work that he does in heaven: " he lives ever to intercede:" as he ever lives, so he lives to intercede ever, and never holds his peace till sinners are saved.

In the last place, read but the 17th chapter, and you shall see, that he presently goes apart to his Father, and speaks over all again to him, which he had said unto them. That chapter (you know) contains a prayer put up just before his suffering, and there he makes his will, and his last request, (for in such a style it runs, " Father, I will," ver. 24,) which will he is gone to see executed in heaven. And this prayer is left us by CHRIST, as a summary of his intercession for us in heaven. He spoke as he meant to do in heaven, and as one that had done his work, and was now come to demand his wages: " I have finished my work which you gayest me to do," (says he, ver. 4.) And whereas he speaks a word or two for himself in the first five verses, he speaks five times as many for them; for all the rest of the chapter is a prayer for them. He uses all kinds of arguments to move his Father for his children: " I have finished the work which you gayest me to do," says he, and to save them is thy work, which remains to be done for me by thee; and " they are thine, and you gayest them me;" and I commend to thee but thine own. And says he, though you have given me a personal glory which I had before the world was; yet there is another glory which I regard almost as much; and that is, in their being

saved: " I am glorified in them," ver. 10, " and they are my joy," ver. 13, and therefore, I must have them " with me wherever I am," ver. 24. You have set thy heart upon them, and have loved them thyself, as you have loved me; " I will that they be where I am," ver. 24, " that they may behold the glory which you have given me." He speaks all this, as if he had been then in heaven, and in possession of all that glory.

SECT. 2

Demonstrations from Passages and Expressions after his Resurrection.

CHRIST'S resurrection was the first step unto his glory. When he laid down his body, he laid down all earthly weakness. " It was sown (as ours is) in weakness;" but with raising it again, he took on him the qualifications of an immortal and glorious body; " it was raised in power:" and therefore, what his heart upon his first rising shall appear to be towards us, will be a certain demonstration what it will continue to be in heaven.

To illustrate this the more, consider that if ever there were a trial taken, whether his love to sinners would continue or not, it was then at his resurrection; for all his disciples, (especially Peter,) had carried themselves the most unworthily towards him. Now when CHRIST came first out of the other world, clothed with that heart and body which he was to wear in heaven, what message sends he first to them We would all think, that as they would not know him in his sufferings, so he would now be as strange to them in his glory: or at least his first words would be of their faithlessness and falsehood: no, his first word concerning them is, " Go tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, to my God and your God." You read elsewhere, that it was great love and condescension in CHRIST so to entitle them; Heb. 2: 11, " He is not ashamed to call them brethren," and for him to call them so when he was entering into his glory, argues the more love. He carries it as Joseph did in the height of his advancement. When he first brake his mind to his brethren, he said, " I am Joseph, your brother:" so CHRIST says here, tell them you have seen JESUS their brother; I own them as brethren still. But what was the message that he would have delivered unto them That I, says he, " ascend to my Father, and your Father." A more friendly speech by far than that of Joseph; (though that was full of bowels,) for Joseph, after he had told them he was their brother, adds, " whom you sold into Egypt:" he reminds them of their unkindness; but not so CHRIST, he reminds them not of what they had done against him. Yea further, you may observe, that he reminds them, not so much of what he had been doing for them. He says not, Tell them I have been dying for them; or that they little think what I have suffered for them: not a word of that neither. But still his heart is upon doing more; he looks not backward to what is past; but forgets his sufferings, as

"a woman her travail, for joy that a man-child is born." Having now despatched that great work on earth for them, he hastens to heaven, to do another. And, though he knew he had business yet to do upon earth that would hold him forty days longer; yet to show that his heart was longing to be at work for them in heaven, he speaks in the present tense, and tells them, " I ascend;" and he expresseth his joy, not only that he goes to his Father, but also that he goes to their Father, to be an Advocate for them. And is indeed JESUS our Brother alive and does he call us brethren and does he talk thus lovingly of us Whose heart would not this overcome

But this was but a message sent his disciples before he met them. Let us next observe his carriage at his meeting them. When he came first amongst them, this was his salutation, " Peace be to you." It is all one with that speech of his used in parting, "My peace I leave with you." After this he breathes on them, and conveys the Holy Ghost in a further measure into them; so to give an evidence of what he would do more plentifully in heaven: and the mystery of that his breathing on them, was to show, that this was the utmost expression of his heart, to give them the Spirit, as well as that the Holy Ghost proceeds from him as well as from the Father. And to what end does he give them the Spirit Not for themselves alone; but that they, by the gifts and assistance of that Spirit, might " forgive men's sins" by converting them to him. " Whose sins soever ye remit, (namely, by your ministry,) they are remitted to them." His mind you see is still upon sinners, and his care for the conversion of their souls. And therefore his lastwords, as they are recorded by St. Luke, are, " Thus it behoved CHRIST to suffer and to rise,— that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations," and adds, "beginning at Jerusalem;" where he had been but a few days before crucified. Of all places, one would have thought he would have excepted that; but he bids them begin there: let them have the first benefit by my death that were the actors in it. Afterwards indeed, when he appears to the eleven, he upbraids them: but with what With their " unbelief and hardness of heart." No sin of theirs troubled him, but their unbelief. Which skews how his heart stands, in that he desires nothing more than to have men believe in him; and this now when glorified.

Another time he shows himself to his disciples, and particularly deals with Peter; but yet tells him not a word of his sins, nor of his forsaking of him, but only goes about to draw from him a testimony of his love to him-self: " Peter," says he, " loves you me" CHRIST loves to hear' that. Full well do those words sound in his ears, when you tell him you love him, though he knows it already. And what was CHRIST's aim in drawing this acknowledgment from Peter that if he loved him he should " feed his lambs." This is the great testimony of love that he would have Peter show him, when he should be in heaven. And how great a testimony is this, how well CHRIST's heart was affected to the

souls of men, that their salvation was his greatest care. And to what end does the evangelist record these things of him after his resurrection One of the evangelists informs us; " These things are written that ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST;" that you might come to him as the Savior of the world; and that, "believing, ye might have life through his name."

SECT. 3

Demonstrations from Passages at and after his Ascension.

LET us next view CHRIST in his ascending. His carriage then also will further assure our hearts of his desire for the happiness of mankind. " He lifted up his hands and blessed them:" and that we might the more observe it, it is added, " and whilst he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." This benediction CHRIST reserved to be his last act. And what was the meaning of it, but to bless them, as God blessed Adam and Eve, bidding them increase and multiply, and so blessing all mankind that were to come of them Thus does CHRIST in blessing his disciples, bless all those that shall believe through their word unto the end of the world. This is interpreted by Peter, Acts 3: 26, when speaking to the Jews, he says, " Unto you first, God having raised up his Son JESUS, sent him to bless you," and how " in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

In the next place, let us consider what CHRIST did when he was come to heaven. How abundantly did he make good all that he had promised in his last discourse For first, he instantly poured out his Spirit. He then received it, and visibly poured it out. And this Spirit is still in our preaching, and in your hearts in hearing, in praying, in reading, and in holy meditation, and persuades you of CHRIST's love to this very day; and is in all these the pledge of the continuance of CHRIST's love still in heaven unto sinners. All our sermons and your prayers are evidences to you, that CHRIST's heart is still the same towards sinners; for the Spirit that assists in all these, comes in his name, and works all by commission from him. And do none of you feel your hearts moved in the preaching of these things, at this and other times And who is it that moves you It is the Spirit which speaks in CHRIST's name, even as himself is said to speak from heaven, Heb. 12: 25. And when you pray, it is the Spirit that " makes intercession for you" in your own hearts, Rom. 8: 26, which intercession of his, is but the evidence and echo of CHRIST's intercession in heaven. The Spirit prays in you, because CHRIST prays for you: he is an intercessor on earth, because CHRIST is an intercessor in heaven. He also follows us to the sacrament, and in that glass shows us CHRIST's face smiling on us; and thus we go away rejoicing that we saw our Savior that day.

Again, all those works, in answer to the apostles' prayers, are a demonstration of this. The apostles went on to preach forgiveness through CHRIST, and in his name; and what signs and wonders did accompany them, to confirm that their preaching And all were the fruits of CHRIST's intercession in heaven. So that what he promised, as an evidence of his minding them in heaven, was abundantly fulfilled. They, upon his asking, did greater works than he: the apostle makes an argument of it, " How shall we escape," says he, " if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles" Yea, let me add, that take all the New Testament, and all the promises in it, all was written since CHRIST's being in heaven, by his Spirit, and that by commission from CHRIST; and therefore all that you find therein you may build on, as his very heart; and therein see, that what he once said on earth, he repealed not a word now he is in heaven.

Thirdly, some of the same apostles spoke with him since, even many years after his ascension. Thus John and Paul, (of which the last was in heaven with him,) and they both give out the same thing of him. St. Paul received the gospel from no man, but by the immediate revelation of JESUS CHRIST from heaven. He was converted by the immediate speech of CHRIST himself; and this long after his ascension. And in that one instance CHRIST abundantly spewed his purpose to continue to all sorts of sinners to the end of the world. Thus that great apostle tells us, " For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first JESUS CHRIST might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to all them that should here-after believe on him." It is express (you see) to assure all sinners, unto the end of the world, of CHRIST's heart towards them.

Then again, sixty years after his ascension, did the apostle John receive a revelation from him; and the revelation is said to be in a more immediate manner, "The revelation of JESUS CHRIST;" and you read that CHRIST appeared to him, and said, " I am he that was dead, and am alive for evermore," Rev. 1: 18. Now let us but consider CHRIST's last words in that his last book, (the last that CHRIST has spoken since he went to heaven, or that he is to utter till the day of judgment,) "1 JESUS have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches: I am the root and offspring of David;—and the Spirit and the Bride say, come: and let him that heareth say, come: and let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." CHRIST was now in heaven, and had before promised to come again, and fetch all his disciples to heaven. In the mean time, mark what an echoing and answering of hearts and desires there is between him from heaven, and believing sinners from below: earth calls upon heaven, as the prophet speaks. The bride from earth says unto CHRIST, Come to me;

and the saints' hearts below say, Come, unto him also. And CHRIST cries out as loud from heaven, Come, in answer unto this desire in them; so heaven and earth ring again of it. " Let him that is athirst come to me; and let him that will come, and take of the water of life freely:" this is CHRIST's speech unto men on earth. They call him to come unto earth to judgment; and he calls sinners to come up to heaven unto him for mercy. They cannot desire his coming to them, so much as he desires their coming to him. All which shows how much his heart was engaged to invite sinners to him; that now, when he is to speak but one sentence more, till we hear the sound to judgment, he should especially make choice of these words. Let them therefore for ever stick with you, as being worthy to be your last thoughts when you come to die, and are going to him. He speaks indeed something after them; but that is but to set a seal unto these words, and to the rest of the Scriptures, and to ingeminate his willingness to come quickly. And all this tends to assure us, that this is his heart, and we shall find him of no other mind until his coming again.

THE HEART OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN, TOWARDS SINNERS ON EARTH

PART 2

HEB. 4: 15

For we have not, an High-Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

SECT. 1

Demonstrations of CHRIST's Love to Sinners, drawn from the Influence the whole Trinity has into the heart of the human nature of CHRIST in heaven.

THIS text, above any other, speaks the heart of CHRIST most, and sets out the frame and workings of it towards sinners; and that so sensibly, that it doth, as it were, -take our hands and lay them upon CHRIST's breast, and let us feel how his heart beats, and his bowels yearn towards us, even now he is in glory. To open them, so far as they serve to my present purpose. All that may any way discourage us, he calls by the name of infirmities, thereby meaning both, 1. The evil of afflictions of what sort soever. 2.. The evil of sins.

1. That under infirmities he means persecutions and afflictions, is probable; not only in that the word is often used in that sense; but also because his scope is to comfort them against what would pull from them their profession, as that foregoing exhortation (" Let us hold fast our profession,") implies. Now the things which attempted to pull it from them, were chiefly persecutions and oppositions.

2. By infirmities are meant sins also; as appears from the remedy against them, which they are here encouraged to seek at the throne of grace, namely, grace and mercy: " Therefore let us come boldly to the _throne of grace, that we may find mercy and obtain grace to help in time of need:" grace to help against the power of sin, and mercy against the guilt and punishment of it. For a support against both these, he lets us understand how sensibly affected the heart of CHRIST is to sinners under all these their infirmities, now he is in heaven. This speech of his is as much as if he had said, though CHRIST is in heaven, yet he retains one tender part in his heart still unarmed, as it were, even to suffer with you, and to be touched if you be. The word is a deep one (svi.ora&ns-ay) he suffers with you; he is as tender in his bowels to you.. as ever he was. That he might be moved to pity you, he is willing to suffer, as it were, one place to be

left naked, on which he may be wounded with your miseries, that so he might be your merciful high-priest.

There are two things which this text gives me occasion to take notice of: 1. That he is touched with a feeling, or sympathizing with us. 2. The way how this comes to pass; even through his having been tempted in all things like unto us.

SECT. 2

The first sort of intrinsical Demonstrations, drawn from the Influence all the three Persons have for ever in the Heart of the human Nature of CHRIST in Heaven.

AND, first, he is touched still with a feeling of our infirmities. That love which CHRIST, when on earth, expressed to be in his heart, and which made him die for sinners upon a command of his Father, does certainly continue in his heart still, now he is in heaven; and that as quick and as tender as ever it was on earth, even as when he was on the cross. It being a law written in the midst of his bowels by his Father, it becomes natural to him, and so indelible, and (as other moral laws of God written in the heart are) perpetual. And as in us, when we shall be in heaven, though faith shall fail, and hope vanish, yet love shall continue; so does this love in CHRIST's heart continue also, and suffers no decay; and is shown as much now, in receiving sinners and interceding for them, -and being pitiful unto them, as then in dying for them. This being the great commandment that God layeth on him, to love, and die for, and to continue to love, and receive sinners that come to him, and raise them up at the latter day, certainly he continues to keep it most exactly; we may therefore be sure that he both does it, and will do it for ever.

And this his love is not a forced love, which he strives only to bear towards us, because his Father has commanded him; but it is his nature, his disposition; he should not be God's Son else, nor take after his heavenly Father; unto whom it is natural to show mercy, but not to punish. To punish is his strange work, but mercy pleases him; he " is the Father of mercy." Now CHRIST is his own Son, 11S, Enos, (as by the way of distinction he is called) and his natural Son. If we, as the elect of God (who are but the adopted sons) are exhorted to put on " bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, and forbearing;" then much more must these dispositions be found in CHRIST, the natural Son; and these not put on by him, but as natural to him as his sonship is. God is love, and CHRIST is love covered over with flesh, yea, our flesh. And besides, as God has fashioned the hearts of all men, and some of the sons of men unto more mercy and pity (naturally) than others, and then the Holy Spirit coming on

them to sanctify their natural dispositions, uses to work according to their tempers; so it is certain that he tempered the heart of CHRIST, and made it of a softer mould than the tenderness of all men's hearts put together. When he was to assume a human nature, he is brought in, saying, " A body has you fitted me," Heb. 10: That is, a human nature fitted as in other things, so in the temper of it, for the Godhead to work in best. And as he took a human nature on purpose to be a merciful high-priest, so a human nature, and of special a temper as might be more merciful than all men or angels. His human nature was made without hands; that is, was not of the make that other men's hearts are; though for the matter the same, yet not for the frame of his Spirit. It was a heart bespoke on purpose' to be a vessel, or rather fountain of mercy; and therefore CHRIST's heart had naturally in the temper of it, more pity than all men or angels have, as through which the mercies of the great God were to be dispensed unto us.

Observe, how CHRIST lays open his own disposition: Matt. 11: 25, " Come to me, you that are weary and heavy-laden,—for I am meek and lowly of heart." We are apt to think, that he, being so holy, is therefore of a severe disposition against sinners, and not able to bear them; no, says he, I am meek; gentleness is my nature and temper; it is my nature to forgive. Yea, but (may we think) he being the Son of GOD, and heir of heaven, and especially being now filled with glory, and sitting at God's right hand, may despise us here below; though not out of anger, yet out of that height of his greatness and so though we conceive him meek, and not prejudiced with injuries, yet he may be too high to regard the condition of poor creatures. No, says CHRIST, I am lowly also, willing to bestow my love upon the poorest and meanest. And all this is not an outward carriage only, but it is *, in the heart. It is his temper, his disposition, his nature to be gracious, which nature he can never lay aside. And that his greatness, when e came to enjoy it in heaven, would not a whit'alter. is disposition, appears by this, that he, at the same time when he uttered these words, took into consideration all his glory: "All things are delivered to me by my Father." And presently after, for all this, he says, " Come unto me, all you that are heavy-laden,—I am meek and lowly," ver. 28, 29. Look therefore what delightful thoughts you use to have of a dear friend, who is of an amiable nature; or of some eminently holy and meek saint, of whom you think, I could put my soul into such a man's hands; even such and infinitely more raised apprehensions should we have of that sweetness and candor that is in JESUS CHRIST, as being much more natural to him.

Farther: if the same Spirit that was upon CHRIST, and in him, when he was on earth, does still rest upon him, now he is in heaven, then these dispositions must still entirely remain in him. When he was on earth, the Holy Spirit rested upon him above measure, and fitted him with a meek spirit for the works of his mediation; and indeed for this did

the Spirit come more especially upon him. Therefore when he was first solemnly inaugurated into that office, the Holy Ghost descended upon him as a dove, to show those special gracious dispositions wherewith the Holy Ghost fitted CHRIST to be a mediator. A dove (you know) is the most innocent and most meek creature, having no fierceness in it, expressing nothing but love, and was therefore a fit emblem to express what a temper the Holy Ghost did then fill the heart of CHRIST with. And though he had the Spirit before, yet now he was anointed with him (in respect to the execution of his office) in a larger measure. Therefore St. Luke notes upon it, chap. 4: 1, " JESUS, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan." And Peter also spews, " how God having anointed him with the Holy Ghost," (namely, at baptism,) " he went about doing good." And that this was the principal thing signified by this descending of the Holy Ghost as a dove upon him, even Christ himself shows; for thus he explains it: " The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor;" (that is, the afflicted for sin;) " He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." And when he had read so much in the synagogue, expressing the compassionate disposition of his spirit unto sinners, then he closes the book, intimating, that these were the main effects of that his receiving the Spirit. " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor;" that is, for this end has he given me his Spirit, because I was designed to this work, and by that Spirit also has he anointed, or qualified me with dispositions suitable to that work. So was he filled with the Spirit, to that end to raise up in him such sweet affections towards sinners.

And it is certain, that the same Spirit that was upon CHRIST below, does still abide upon him in heaven. It must never be said, the Spirit of the Lord is departed from him, who is the bestower of the Holy Ghost upon us. And if the Spirit once given to his members abides

with them for ever, much more does this Spirit abide upon CHRIST the head, from whom we all receive him, and by virtue of which Spirit's dwelling in him, he continues to dwell in us. Therefore, Peter giving an account how it came to pass, that they were so filled with the Holy Ghost, says, That " CHRIST having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost," had " shed him forth on them;" which receiving is not to be only understood of his bare receiving the promise of the Holy Ghost for us; but further that he had received him first as poured forth on himself, and so shed him forth on them. According to that rule, that whatever God does unto us by CHRIST, he first does it unto CHRIST. All promises are fulfilled unto him first, and so unto us in him; and this may be one reason why (as John 7: 39,) " the Spirit was not as yet given, because JESUS

was not as yet glorified." But now he is in heaven, he is said " to have the seven Spirits of God." Rev. 1: 3, " Now those seven Spirits" are the Holy Ghost; for so it must needs be meant, and not of any creature, as appears by the 4th verse of that chapter, where " grace and peace are wished from the seven Spirits;" which are so called in respect of the various effects of the Holy Spirit both in CHRIST and us, though but one in person.

And herein you may help your faith by an experiment of the Holy Ghost dwelling in your own hearts, and there not only working in you meekness towards others, but pity towards yourselves; and to that end, stirring up in you unutterable groans before the throne of grace, for grace and mercy. Now, seeing that the same Spirit dwells in CHRIST's heart in heaven, that does in yours here, and always works in his heart for you, and then in yours by commission from him; rest assured, that that Spirit stirs up in him bowels of mercy infinitely larger towards you, than you can have unto yourselves.

SECT. 3

Other Proofs drawn from several Engagements now lying upon CHRIST in Heaven.

OTHER proofs of CHRIST's love may be drawn from many other engagements continuing and lying upon him, now he is in heaven; which must needs incline his heart towards us as much, yea, more than ever. As, 1. The continuation of all those near and intimate relations unto us, which no glory of his can make any alteration in. Fleshly relations indeed cease in that other world, be-cause they were made only for this world; but these relations of CHRIST to us, were made in order to the world to come; and therefore are in their full vigor and strength therein.

To illustrate this by the indissoluble tie of those relations of this world, whereto no difference of condition can give any discharge. We see in Joseph, when advanced, that as his relations continued, so his affections remained the same to his poor brethren, who had injured him, and also to his father. So, Gen. xlv. where he mentioneth his own dignities and advancement; " God has made me a father to Pharoah, and lord of all his house;" yet he forgetteth not, " I am Joseph your brother," ver. 4. And his affections appeared also to be the same; for he " wept over them, and could not refrain himself," ver. 1, 2. And the like he expresseth to his father, ver. 9, " Go to my father, and say, Thus says thy son Joseph, God has made me lord over all Egypt," (and yet thy son Joseph still.) Much more does this hold good of husband and wife, for they are in a nearer relation yet. But beyond all these relations, the relation of head and members as it is most natural, so it obliges most. " No man yet ever hated his own flesh," says the apostle, " but loves and cherisheth it." And it is the law of nature, that " if one member

be honored, all the members are to rejoice with it," 1 Cor. 12: 26; " and if one member suffer, all the rest are to suffer with it." Even so is CHRIST, as ver. 12. And these relations are those that move CHRIST to continue his love unto us.

CHRIST is both the founder, the subject, and the most perfect pattern to us, of the relations that are found on earth. 1. He is the founder of all relations, and affections that accompany them, both in nature and grace. As therefore the Psalmist argues, " Shall he not see, who made the eye" So do I Shall not he who put these affections into parents, and brothers, have them much more in himself " Though our father Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; yet, O Lord, you art our Father, and our Redeemer," Isa. lxiii. 16. The prophet speaks it of CHRIST, as appears by ver. 1, 2; and he speaks of CHRIST as supposed in heaven; for he adds, " Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and thy glory." There are but two things that should make him forget sinners; his holiness, as they are sinners, and his glory, as they are mean and low creatures. Now he here mentions both, to show, that notwithstanding either as they are sinners he rejects them not, and as they are base and mean he despises them not. 2. He is the subject of all relations, which no creature is. If a man be a husband, yet not a father, or a brother; but CHRIST is a11. No one relation being sufficient to express his love, wherewith he loves us. 3. He is the pattern of all these our relations, and they all are but the copies of his. Thus in Ephes. 5: 25, CHRIST is made the pattern of the relation and love of husbands: " Husbands," says the apostle, " love your wives, as CHRIST loved his church." Yea, ver. 31, 32, 33, the marriage of Adam, and the very words he then spoke of cleaving to a wife, are made but the shadows of CHRIST's marriage to his church. Herein I speak, says he, " concerning CHRIST and the church: and this is a great mystery." First, a mystery, that is, this marriage of Adam was ordained hiddenly, to signify CHRIST's marriage with his church. And secondly, it is a great mystery, because the thing thereby signified is in itself so great, that this is but a shadow of it. And therefore all those relations, and the affections of them, which you see and read to have been in men, are all ordained to be but shadows of what is in CHRIST; who alone is the truth and substance of all similitudes in nature, as well as the ceremonial types.

If therefore no advancement does or ought to alter such relations in men, then not in CHRIST. " He is not ashamed to call us brethren," Heb. 2: 11. And yet the apostle had just before said of him, ver. 9, " We see JESUS crowned with glory and honor." Yea, and as when one member suffers, the rest are touched with sympathy, so it is with CHRIST. Paul persecuted the saints, the members; and " why persecutest thou me" cries the Head in heaven. " We are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone." And therefore though CHRIST be now in glory, yet let not that discourage you; for he has the heart of a

husband towards you, being " betrothed unto you for ever, in faithfulness, and in loving-kindness."

This love of CHRIST unto us is yet further increased, by what he both did and suffered for us on earth; "Having loved his own," so far as to die for them, he will certainly " love them unto the end." We shall find in all sorts of relations, that the having done much for any does beget a further care and love towards them. And the like effect those eminent sufferings of CHRIST for us, have certainly produced in him. We may see this in parents: for besides that natural affection planted in mothers towards their children, the very pain, and travail they were at in bringing them forth, increases their affections towards them; and therefore the eminency of affection is attributed unto that of the mother towards her child, and put upon this, that it is " the son of her womb," Isaiah xlix. 15. And as it is thus in paternal affection, so also in conjugal. The more lovers have suffered the one for the other, the more is their love increased; and the party for whom they suffered, is thereby rendered the more dear unto them. And as it is thus in these natural relations, so also in spiritual. We may see it in holy men; as in Moses, who was a mediator for the Jews, as CHRIST is for us. Moses therein being but CHRIST's type and shadow, and therefore I the rather instance in him. He, under GOD, had been the deliverer of the people of Israel out of Egypt, with the hazard of his own life, and had led them in the wilderness, and given them that good law that was their wisdom in the sight of all the nations; and what he had done for them did so mightily engage his heart, that although God in his wrath against them, offered to make of him alone a greater and mightier nation than they were, yet Moses refused that offer, and still went on to inter-cede for them, and, among others, used this very argument to GOD, even the consideration of what he had already done for them, thereby to move God to continue his goodness unto them; yea, so set was Moses's heart upon them, that he not only refused that former offer which God made him, but he made an offer unto God of him-self, to sacrifice his portion in life for their good: " Rather," says he, " blot me out of the book of life."

We may observe the like zealous love in holy Paul, towards all those converts of his, whom in his epistles he wrote unto; towards whom, that which so much endeared his affections, was the pains, the care, and the sufferings he had had in bringing them unto CHRIST. Thus towards the Galatians, how solicitous was he how afraid to lose his labor on them P " I am afraid of you," says he, " lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain;" yea, he utters himself more deeply: " My little children," says he, " I again travail in birth, till CHRIST be formed in you." What love then must needs be in the heart of CHRIST, from that which he has done and suffered for us

Did Moses ever do that for the people, which CHRIST has done and suffered for you He acknowledged, that he had not born the people in his womb; but CHRIST bare us all, and we were the travail of his soul. Was Paul crucified for you But CHRIST was. Or if Paul had been crucified, would it have profited us No. If then Paul was content to be in travail again for the Galatians, when he feared their falling away; how does CHRIST's heart work towards sinners he having put in so infinite a stock of sufferings for us already. And he has so much love to us besides, that if otherwise we could not be saved, he could be content to suffer for us afresh. But he needed to do this but once; so perfect was his priesthood. Be assured, then, that his love was not worn out at his death, but increased by it. His love it was that causes[him to " lay down his life for his sheep; and greater love than this has no man." But now, having died, this must needs cause him from his soul to cleave the more unto them. When CHRIST was in the midst of his pains, one, for whom he was then suffering, said, " Lord, remember me, when you comest into thy kingdom!" And could CHRIST mind him then (As you know he did, telling him, " This day shall you be with me in Paradise,") then surely when CHRIST came to Paradise, he would do it much more; and remember him too by the surest token; namely, the pains which he was then enduring for him, he remembers both them and us still. if he would have us " remember his death till he comes," then certainly himself remembers it in heaven muchmore: no question but he remembers us, as he promised to do that penitent thief, now he is in his kingdom.

Thirdly, his office still requires of him all mercifulness and graciousness towards sinners: and therefore whilst he continues invested with that office, as he for ever cloth, his heart must needs continue full of tenderness. Now that office is his priesthood; which this text mentions as the foundation of our encouragement to come " boldly to the throne of grace, for grace and mercy,—seeing we have a great high-priest entered into the heavens." The office of high-priesthood is altogether an office of grace. As CHRIST's kingly office is an office of power and dominion, and his prophetic office is an office of knowledge and wisdom; so his priestly office is an office of grace and mercy. The high-priest's office did properly deal in nothing else. If there had not been a mercy-seat in the holy of holies, the high-priest had not been appointed to have gone into it. It was mercy, and reconciliation, and atonement for sinners, that he was to treat about at the mercy-seat. Now this was but a typical allusion unto this office of CHRIST in heaven. And therefore the apostle in this text, when he speaks of this our high-priest's being

entered into heaven, makes mention of a throne of grace, in answer to that type both of the high-priest of old, and the mercy-seat in the holy of holies. And further to confirm this, the apostle goes on to open that very type, and apply it to CHRIST, unto

this very purpose; and this in the very next words to my text, chap. 5: 1, 2, 3, in which he gives a full description of an high-priest, and all the properties that were to be in him, together with the principal end that that office was ordained for. Now the essential qualifications there specified, that were to be in a high-priest, are mercy and grace; and the ends for which he is there said to be ordained are works of mercy and grace. So that these words are a confirmation of what he had said before, and set out CHRIST the substance, in his grace and mercifulness, under Aaron and his sons the shadows: and all this for the comfort of believers.

Now, first, for the ends for which those high-priests were appointed, they speak nothing but grace and mercy unto sinners. It is said, he was one " ordained for men to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." There is both the end for whom, and the end for which he was ordained. 1. For whom: he was ordained for men, that is, for men's cause, and for their good. Had it not been for the salvation of men, God had never made CHRIST a priest. So that he is wholly to employ all his power for them, for whose cause he was ordained a priest. He is to ,*, all things that are to be done by us towards GOD, or for us with God; he is to pro-cure us all favor from GOD, and to do all that God would have done for our salvation. And that he might do this willingly for us; as every high-priest was taken from among men; so was CHRIST, that he might be a priest of our own nature, and so be more kind unto us than the nature of an angel could have been. 2. The end for which every high-priest was ordained, shows this: he was to " offer gifts and sacrifices for sins:" sacrifices for sins, to pacify God's wrath against sin, and gifts to procure

His favor. You know the apostle, in the foregoing words, had mentioned grace and mercy, and encouraged us to come with boldness unto this High-priest for both; and to encourage us the more, he says, the high-priest by his office was to offer for both; gifts to procure all grace, and sacrifices to procure all mercy for us. Thus you see the ends which he is ordained for, are all matter of grace and mercy. 3. The qualification that was required in a high-priest, was, that he should be " one that could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." And this is set forth, ver. 2. He that was high-priest, was not chosen for his deep wisdom, but for the mercy and compassion that was in him. That is it, which is here made the special property in an high-priest, as such; and the essential qualification that was inwardly to constitute and fit him for that office; as God's appointment did outwardly.

Now, if this be so essential a property to a high-priest; then it is in CHRIST most eminently. And he could not have been God's high-priest, if he had not had such a heart for mercifulness; yea, and no longer could he have been a priest, than he continued to

have a heart that can have compassion. The word which we translate, to have compassion, is exceeding emphatical; it is in the original, *, and signifies, "to have compassion according to every one's measure and proportion:" so that CHRIST is a high-priest, that "can have compassion according to the measure of every one's distress;" and one that considers every circumstance in it, and will accordingly afford his pity and help. As the measure of any man's need and distress is from sin and misery, accordingly is he affected towards him. And as we have sins of several sizes, accordingly has he mercies; whether they be ignorances, or sins of daily incursion, or sins more gross and presumptuous. And therefore let neither of them discourage any from coming to CHRIST for grace' and mercy.

So then, this goes further than the former, for it spews, that to exercise mercy, is the duty of his place; and if he will be faithful, he must be merciful. For faithfulness in any office imports an exact performance of something appointed by him, who designs one to that office; and that this is a true description of faithfulness, and also that this faithfulness so described is in CHRIST, we have at once implied, in that which immediately follows in the be-ginning of chap. 3: 3, "Who was," (says the apostle, going to speak of CHRIST) "faithful to him that appointed him, as Moses also was faithful in all his house:" If this office does by God's appointment thus bind him to it, then certainly he will perform it most exactly. And our comfort may be, that his faithfulness lies in being merciful; therefore they are both here joined together.

To conclude this head: never fear that CHRIST's advancement in heaven should any whit alter his disposition for this very advancement engageth him the more. For although he be entered into the heavens; yet consider, as it is here added, that it is to be an high-priest there; and so long, fear not; for his place itself will call for mercy from him. And although in the heavens he be "advanced far above all principalities and powers," yet still his high-priesthood goes with him and accompanies him: for "such an high-priest became us, as was higher than the heavens," Heb. 7: 26. And further, though he sits at God's right hand, and on his Father's throne, yet that throne is a throne of grace. And as the mercy-seat, in the type, was the highest thing in the holy of holies; so the throne of grace (which is an infinite encouragement unto us) is the highest seat in heaven. And as Solomon says, "A king's throne is established by righteousness," it continues firm by it; so is CHRIST's throne by grace. Grace was both the first founder of his throne, and also is the establisher of it.

Fourthly, God has ordered it, for an everlasting obligation of CHRIST's heart unto us, that his giving grace, mercy, and comfort to us, is one great part of his glory, and of the revenue of his happiness in heaven, and of his inheritance there. To explain this,

consider, that the human nature of CHRIST in heaven has a double capacity of glory and happiness: one in that near communion with his Father, and the other person, through his personal union with the Godhead. Which joy of his, CHRIST speaks of Psal. 16: 11, " In thy presence is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." And this is a constant and settled fullness of pleasure such as admits not any addition or diminution, but is always one and the same, absolute and entire in itself; and of itself alone sufficient for the Son of GOD, and heir of all things to live upon, though he should have had no other comings in of joy and delight from any creature. And this is his natural inheritance.

But God has bestowed upon him another capacity of glory, and a revenue of pleasure to come in another way; and answerably another fullness; namely, from his church and spouse, which is his body. Thus, Ephes. 1: when the apostle had spoken the highest things of CHRIST's personal advancement in heaven, as of his "sitting down at God's right hand far above all principalities and powers," he adds this, " And gave him to be a head to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all." So that, although he of himself personally be so full, (the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in him,) that he overflows to the filling all things; yet he is pleased to account his church and the salvation of it another fullness unto him, superadded unto the former. As Son of God he is complete, and that of himself; but as a head, he has another additional fullness of joy from the happiness of his members. And as pleasure is the companion, and the result of action; so this riseth unto him, from his exercising acts of grace, and from his continual doing good unto, and for those his members; or, (as the apostle expresseth it) from his filling them with all mercy, grace, comfort, and felicity; himself becoming yet more full by filling them: and this is his inheritance also, as that other was. So that CHRIST has a double inheritance; one personal, and due unto him as he is the Son of GOD, the first moment of his incarnation, ere he had wrought any one work towards our salvation: another acquired, and merited by his having performed that great service and obedience. And certainly, besides the glory of his person, there is the glory of his office, of mediatorship and headship of his church: and though he be never so full of himself, yet he despises not this part of his revenue that comes in from below.

This superadded glory and happiness of CHRIST is enlarged, as his members come to have the purchase of his death more and more laid forth upon them. So that when their sins are pardoned, their hearts more sanctified, and their spirits comforted, then comes he to see the fruit of his labor, and is comforted thereby; for he is the more glorified by it: yea, he is more rejoiced in this than themselves can be. And this must needs keep up in his heart his care and love unto his children here below, to water and refresh them every moment.

Take an estimate of CHRIST's heart herein, from those two holy apostles Paul and John. What (next to immediate communion with CHRIST) was the greatest joy they had in this world, but only the fruit of their ministry in the lives and hearts of such as they had begotten unto CHRIST See how Paul utters himself, 1 Thess. 2: 19, " What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing Ye are our glory and our joy," ver. 20. St. John says the like: " I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth," 3 Epist. 4. Now what were Paul and John but instruments by whom they believed and were begotten Neither of these were crucified for them; nor were these children of theirs, " the travail of their souls." How much more unto CHRIST, (whose interest in our welfare is so infinitely greater) must his members be his joy and his crown And to see them io come in to him for grace and mercy, and to walk in the truth, rejoiceth him much more; for he thereby " sees the travail of his soul," and so " is satisfied." Certainly what Solomon says of parents, that " a wise son maketh a glad father," is much more true of CHRIST. Holiness, faithfulness, and comfortableness in our spirits, do make glad the heart of CHRIST, our everlasting Father. Himself has said it; I beseech you believe him, and carry your-selves accordingly. And if part of his joy arise from hence, that we do well, then doubt not of the continuance of his affections; for love unto himself will continue them towards us, and readiness to receive us when we come for grace and mercy.

There is a fifth engagement which his very having our nature, puts upon him for ever. One great end of that personal union of our nature was, that he might be a merciful high-priest. So that as his office lays it as a duty upon him, so his becoming man qualifies him for the performance of it. This we find both to have been a requisite in our high-priest, to qualify him the better for mercy; and also one of those great ends, which God had in that assumption of our nature. First, a requisite, on purpose to make him more merciful. So it is said, " Every high-priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men, that so he might be one that can have compassion;" namely, with a pity that is natural, such as a man bears to one of his own kind. For otherwise the angels would have made greater high-priests than one of our nature; but then they would not have pitied men, as men do their brethren, of the same kind and nature with them. And secondly, this was also God's end in ordaining CHRIST's assumption of our nature, which that other place holds forth; " Verily, he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham;" that is, a human nature; and " it behooved him to be like us in all things, that he might be a merciful high-priest, *, to the end he might become, or be made merciful."

But was not the Son of God as merciful, may some say, without the taking of our nature, as afterwards I then had assumed it Or is his mercy thereby made larger than of

itself it should have been, had he not took the human nature on him I answer, yes, he was as merciful: but yet hereby is held forth an evident demonstration, (and the greatest that could have been given unto men) of the everlasting continuance of God's mercies unto men: by this that God is for everlasting become a man; and so we are thereby assured, that he will be merciful unto men, who are of his own nature, and that for ever. For as his union with our nature is for everlasting; so thereby is sealed up to us the continuation of these his mercies, to be for everlasting: so that he can, and will no more cease to be merciful unto men, than himself can now cease to be a man.

The greatest mercy was in God; and unto the greatness of these mercies nothing is, or could be added, by the human nature assumed; but rather CHRIST's manhood had all his largeness of mercy from the Deity so that had he not had the mercies of God to enlarge his heart towards us, he could never have held out to have for ever been merciful to us. But this human nature assumed, adds a new way of being merciful. It assimilates all these mercies, and makes them the mercies of a man. It makes them human mercies, and so gives a naturalness and kindness unto them to our capacities. So that God does now in as kindly and as natural a way pity us, who are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, as a man pities a man. Thereby to encourage us to come to him, and to be familiar with GOD, and treat with him for grace and mercy, as a man would do with a man; as knowing, that in that man CHRIST JESUS, whom we believe in, God dwells, and his mercies work in and through his heart in a human way.

What comfort may this afford unto our faith, that CHRIST must cease to be a man, if he continue not to be merciful; seeing the very end of his becoming a man, was, that he might be merciful unto us, and that in a way so familiar to our apprehensions, as our own hearts give the experience of the like, which otherwise, as GOD, he was not capable of. And add but this bold word to it, though a true one, that he may now as soon cease to be GOD, as to be man; the human nature, (after he had once assumed it) being raised up to all the natural rights of the Son of God; whereof one (and that now made natural unto him) is to continue for ever united. And he may as soon cease to be either, as not to be ready to show mercy. So that not only the scope of CHRIST's office, but also the intention of his assuming our nature, does lay a further engagement upon him, and that more strong than any, or than all of the former, flow this is to be understood, that CHRIST's Heart is touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities.

THE HEART OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN, TOWARDS SINNERS ON EARTH

PART 3

HEB. 4: 15

For we have not an High-Priest who cannot be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without Sin.

SECT. 1

HAVING thus given full demonstration of the tenderness of CHRIST's heart unto us now he is in heaven, I come to open these words; namely, the way and manner of CHRIST's being affected with pity unto us; both how it is to be understood by us, and how such affections come to be in his heart; whereas GOD, of himself, was so blessed and perfect, that his blessedness could not have been touched with the least feeling of our infirmities; neither was he in himself capable of any such affection of pity, or compassion; he is not a man that he should pity or repent. He can indeed do that for us in our distress, which a man that pities us uses to do; but the affections and bowels themselves he is not capable of. Hence, amongst other ends of assuming man's nature, this fell in before God as one, that God might thereby become loving and merciful unto men, as one man is to another: and so, what before was but improperly spoken, and by way of metaphor in the Old Testament, might now be attributed to him in reality; that God might be said to compassionate as a man, and to be " touched with a feeling of our infirmities." And thus, by this happy union of both natures, the language of the Old Testament, uttered only in a figure, becomes fulfilled in the truth of it, as in all other things the shadows of it were in CHRIST fulfilled. And this is the first step towards understanding what is here said of CHRIST.

Add this, that God so ordered it, that before CHRIST should clothe his human nature with that glory he has in heaven, he should first take it as clothed with all our infirmities, even the same that cleave unto us. And, during that time, God prepared for him all sorts of afflictions, which we ourselves here meet with, and all that time he was acquainted with, and inured unto the like sorrows that we are. And God left him to that infirmity and tenderness of spirit, to take in all distresses as deeply as any one of us, and to exercise the very same affections under all these distresses that we, at any time, find stirring in our hearts: and this God ordered, on purpose to frame his heart (when he should be in glory,) unto such affections as these, spoken of in the text. And this both this text suggests, as also that fore-mentioned place, Heb. 2: 13, " Forasmuch as

we are partakers of flesh and blood, (which phrase does ever note the frailties of man's nature,) he himself took part of the same, that he might be a merciful high-priest:" and then the apostle gives this reason of it, " for in that him-self has suffered, being tempted, he is able (having a heart fitted out of experience, to pity and) to succor them that are tempted." It was not the bare taking of human nature, (if glorious from the first,) that would thus fully have fitted him to be affectionately pitiful out of experience; but his taking our nature clothed with frailties, and living in this world as we: this has for ever fitted his heart by experience to be in our very hearts and bosoms; and not barely to know the distress, and, as a man, to be affected with human affection; but experimentally remembering the like in himself; and this likewise the text suggests as the way whereby our distresses are let into his heart the more feelingly. " We have not an high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Observe how fully the apostle speaks of CHRIST's having been tempted here below. First, for the matter, the several sorts of temptations: he says he was tempted, *xa9a =Ina*, " in all points," or things of any kind, where-with we are exercised. Secondly, for the manner, *ral' op.oworl9a*, "like as we are." His heart having been just so affected, so wounded, pierced, and distressed, in all such trials as ours used to be, only without sin. God (on purpose) left all his affections to their full tenderness and quickness of sense of evil. So that CHRIST took to heart all that befell him, as deeply as might be; he slighted no cross either from God or men, but had and felt the utmost load of it. Yea, his heart was made more tender in all sorts of affections than any of ours, (even as it was in love and pity,) and this made him " a man of sorrows;" and that more than any other man was, or shall be.

Now therefore, we may easily conceive, how our miseries are let into his heart, and come to stir up such kindly affections of compassion in him. As " all power in heaven and earth is committed unto him" as Son of Man, so all knowledge is given him of all things done in heaven and earth, and this as a son of man (t e.): his knowledge and power being of equal extent. He is the sun as well in respect of knowledge, as of righteousness, and there is nothing hid from his light and beams, which pierce the darkest corners of the hearts of the sons of men: he knows the sores (as Solomon expresseth it,) and distresses of their hearts. As a looking-glass made in the form of a globe, and hung in the midst of a room, takes in all the things done or that are therein at once; so does the enlarged understanding of CHRIST's human nature take in the affairs of this world; especially the miseries of his members; and this at once. He remembers his death still, and the suffering of it; and as he remembers it, to put his Father in mind thereof, so he remembers it also to affect his own heart with what we

feel. And his memory presenting the impression of the like now afresh unto him, how it was once with him; hence he comes feelingly and experimentally to know how it is now with us. As God said to the Israelites, "Ye know the hearts of strangers, seeing ye were strangers," and therefore does command them to pity strangers, and to use them well: so may it be said of CHRIST, that he does know the hearts of his children in misery, seeing himself was once in misery. He has not only such affections as are proper to human nature; but such affections are stirred up in him, from experience of the like by himself once tasted in a frail nature like unto ours. And thus much for the way of letting in all our miseries into CHRIST's heart now.

SECT. 2

What Manner of affliction this is.

Now concerning this affection in CHRIST, how far it extends, and how deep it may reach, I think no man in this life can fathom. "If the heart of a king be inscrutable," (as Solomon speaks,) the heart of the King of kings in glory is much more so. I will not take upon me to "intrude into things I have not seen," but shall endeavor to speak safely, and therefore warily, so far as the light of Scripture and right reason shall warrant my Way.

1. It is certain that this affection of sympathy in CHRIST is not in all things such a kind of affection as was in him in the days of his flesh. Which is clear by what the apostle speaks of him then, Heb. 5:7, "Who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, was heard in that which he feared." Where we see his state here below is called by way of distinction from what it is now, the days of his flesh. By flesh is not meant the substance of human nature, (for he retains that still;) but the frail quality of subjection to mortality. It is spoken of man's nature, in respect to its being subject to wearing and decay, by outward casualties or inward passions. And, accordingly the apostle instanceth, as in death, so also in such frail passions and affections as did work suffering and a wearing and wasting of his spirits; such as passionate sorrow, joined with strong cries and tears, and fear. Now these days of his flesh being over and past, all such passionate overflowing of sorrow or fear are ceased therewith, and he is now no way capable of them, or subjected to them.

2. Yet, why may it not be affirmed that for substance the same kind of affection that wrought in his whole man, both body and soul, when he was here, works still in him now he is in heaven (If this position he allayed with due cautions,) for, if for substance

the same flesh and blood remain and have their use; then why not the same affections also And those not stirring only and merely in the soul, but working in the body also, unto which that soul is joined, and so remaining really human affections But these affections of pity and sympathy, though they move his bowels, and affect his heart as they did here; yet they do not afflict him in the least, or become a burden unto his spirit. As in this life he was troubled and grieved, (without sin;) so now he compassionates without the least disquietment or perturbation, which yet necessarily accompanied his affections whilst he was here, because of the frailty in which his body and spirits were framed. His perfection destroys not his affections, but only corrects and amends the imperfection of them.

Again, all natural affections that have not in them something unbecoming that glory wherein CHRIST now is, both schoolmen and other divines acknowledge to be in him. " Those affections which are natural to man, and have no adhesion of sin or shame unto them, but are wholly governed by reason, and are exempt from such effects as may any way hurt either the soul or the body, may well stand with the state of souls in bliss." Now it becomes him to have such human affections as quicken and provoke him to our help; not such as make him a man of sorrows again; but such as make him a man of succors unto us. Because his members are still under sin and misery, therefore it is no way uncomely for him in that state, to have affections suitable to this his relation. If his state of glory had been wholly ordained for his own personal happiness, then indeed there had been no use of such affections. But his relation to us being one part of his glory, therefore they are most proper for him; yea, it were uncomely if he had them not. Neither are they a weakness in him, as so considered; but rather part of his strength (as the apostle calls them,) Duvau. And although such affections might in one respect be thought an imperfection; yet in another respect, (namely, his relation to us,) they are his perfection. As he is our head, it is his glory to be sensible of all our miseries; yea, it were his imperfection if he were not.

And let me add this for our comfort, that though all such affections as are any way a burden to his spirit, or noxious to his body, be not now compatible to him; and though that passionate frailty, which did help him here to pity, and relieve men in misery, be cut off: yet in those workings of affections which he has now, (which for substance are the same,) there is, (instead of that passionate frailty,) a greater capaciousness, vastness, and also quickness, so to make up a compensation; and no less effectually to quicken him to relieve us, than those former affections did. For it is certain, that as his knowledge was enlarged upon his entering into glory; so his affections of love and pity are enlarged in solidity, strength, and reality. They are not less, but are only made more spiritual. And as Solomon's heart was as large in bounty and royalty as in knowledge; so

CHRIST's affections of love are as large as his knowledge or his power. They are all of a like extent. So far as God's intention to show mercy does reach, (and who knows the end of those riches) So far does CHRIST's disposition to bestow it. Eph. 3: 19, " The love of CHRIST," God-man, " passes knowledge." It has not been diminished by his going to heaven. Though God in his nature be more merciful than CHRIST's human nature; yet the exercise of CHRIST's affections is as large as God's purposes of mercy. And all those large mercies are become human mercies; the mercies of a man unto men.

Lastly, if these affections of CHRIST's heart be not suffering affections; yet we may express this of them, that there is lessfulness of joy in CHRIST's heart whilst he sees us in misery, than when we are presented to him free of them all. To clear this, I must, recall that distinction of a doublefulness of joy, which CHRIST is ordained to have: the one natural, due unto his person, as in himself considered: the other additional, and arising from the complete happiness of his church. So Eph. 1: 23, though, by reason of his personal fulness, he is said to fill all in all; yet in relation to his church, the perfection of this his body's beatitude, called his fulness, is imperfect. And therefore, until he has filled them withall happiness, and delivered them from all misery, himself remains under some kind of imperfection; and his affections also, in comparison of what his heart shall have when they receive this fullness.

I shall add some illustration by this similitude (though it hold not in all things:) the spirits of just men departed are said to be perfect, Heb. 12: yet, because they have bodies unto which they have a relation, they in this respect may be said to be imperfect, till these bodies be reunited and glorified with them. Thus in some analogy it stands between CHRIST personal, and CHRIST mystically considered. although CHRIST in his own person be complete in happiness; yet in relation to his members he is imperfect, and so accordingly has affections suited unto this his relation: which is no derogation from him at all. The Scripture therefore attributes some affections to him, which have an imperfection joined with them. Thus expectation and desire, (which are but imperfect affections in comparison of that joy which is in the full fruition of what was expected or desired,) are attributed to him, as he is man, until the day of judgment. Thus, Heb 10: 12, 13, he is said to sit in heaven, " expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." The destruction of which enemies will add to the manifestative glory of his kingdom. Now as that will add to the fullness of his greatness; so the complete salvation of his members will add to the completeness of his glory. And as the expectation of his enemies' ruin may be said to be an imperfect affection in comparison of the triumph that one day he shall have over them; so his joy which he now has in his spouse is but imperfect, in comparison of that which shall fill his heart at the great day of marriage:

SECT. 3

How Christ's Heart can be feelingly touched with all our Infirmities; seeing he was tempted without Sin.

THERE remains one difficulty to be removed, which cannot but arise in every good heart. " You told us, (may they say,) that by infirmities, sins were meant; and that the apostle's scope was to encourage us against them also, (and they are indeed the greatest discomforts and discouragements of all other.) Now against them this which the apostle here speaks affordeth us but little comfort; seeing CHRIST knows not how experimentally to pity us therein, for he knew no sin: yea, the apostle himself does here except it, ' He was tempted in all things, yet without sin.' It may comfort us indeed, that CHRIST does pity us in all other infirmities, because he himself was subject to the like; but he never knew what it was to be vexed with sin, (as I am,) and how shall I relieve myself against that, by what the apostle here speaks of him" I shall endeavour to give some satisfaction in this by these following considerations.

First, The apostle puts in indeed that he was tempted, yet without sin; and it was well for us that he was thus without sin; for otherwise he had not been a fit priest to have saved us: so Heb. 7: 25, " Such an High-Priest became us as was separate from sinners." Yet withal, consider, that he came as near in that point as might be, " He was tempted in all things," though " without sin" on his part; yet tempted to all sin, so far as to be afflicted in those temptations, and to see the misery of those that are tempted. Even as in taking our nature in his birth, he came as near as could be, without being tainted with original sin, by taking the very same matter to have his body made of that all ours are made of; so in the point of actual sin also, he suffered himself to be tempted as far as might be, and yet to keep himself pure. And because he was tempted by SATAN unto sin, therefore it is added, "yet without sin:" it is as if he had said, sin never stained him, though he was outwardly tempted to it.

Then, Secondly, to fit him to pity us, he was vexed with the filth and power of sin in others whom he con-versed with, more than any of us with sin in ourselves. His righteous soul was vexed with it, as Lot's with the impure conversation of the Sodomites. He " endured the contradictions of sinners" against himself, Heb. 12: 3, " the reproaches of them that reproached thee," that is, GOD, " fell upon me," Rom. 15: 3, that is, every sin went to his heart. So as in this there is but this difference between him and us, that we are vexed with sin in ourselves; but his heart with sin in others only; yet so as his vexation was the greater, by how much his soul was more righteous than ours.

Yea, and Thirdly, it may be said of CHRIST whilst he was here below, that in the same sense wherein he bore our sickness, (who yet was never personally tainted with any disease,) in the same sense he bore our sins; namely thus: CHRIST, when he came to one that was sick, afflicted himself with his sickness, as if it had been his own. Thus, at his raising of Lazarus, it is said that he groaned in spirit: and this seems to be the best interpretation that I have met with, of that difficult place in Matt. 8: 16, 17, where it is said, " He healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." In like manner he might bare our sins, being affected therewith as if they had been his own.

And as for the guilt of sin, and the temptations from it, he knows more of that than any one of us. He tasted the bitterness of that more deeply than we can, and of the cup of his Father's wrath for it; and so is able experimentally to pity a heart wounded with it, and struggling under such temptations. He knows full well the heart of one forsaken by GOD, seeing himself felt it, when he cried out, " My God! my God! why has you forsaken me"

SECT. 4

The Uses of all.

THAT which has been said may afford us the strongest encouragements against our sins of any other consideration whatsoever; and may give us the greatest assurance of their being removed from us: for, First, CHRIST him-self suffers, as it were, under them, as his enemies, which therefore he will be sure to remove for his own quiet's sake. His heart would not be quiet, but that he knows they shall be removed. As God says in the prophet, so may CHRIST say much more, " My bowels are troubled for him, I remember him still," Jer. xxxi. 20. Secondly, your very sins move him to pity more than to anger. Whilst therefore you look on them as your disease, and complain to CHRIST of them, and cry out, " O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me" CHRIST takes part with you: his anger is turned upon your sin, yea, his pity is increased the more towards you, even as the heart of a father is to a child that has some loath-some disease. The object of pity is one in misery whom we love; and the greater the misery is, the more is the pity. Now of all miseries, sin is the greatest, and whilst yourselves look at it as such, CHRIST will look upon it as such also in you. And he, loving your persons, and hating only the sin, his hatred shall all fall upon the sin, to free you of it by its destruction; but his bowels shall be the more drawn out to you.

2. Whatever trial, or temptation, or misery we are under, we may comfort ourselves with this, that CHRIST was once under the same; which may comfort us by considering, First, That we are thereby conformed to his example, for he was tempted in all. Secondly, We may look to that particular instance of Christ's sufferings as a meriting cause to procure succour for us under the same. And, Thirdly, His having once borne the like, assures us, that he experimentally knows the distress of such a condition, and so is yet further moved and quickened thereby to help us. 3. As the doctrine delivered is a comfort, so it is the greatest motive against sin, and persuasive unto obedience, to consider, that Christ's heart, if it be not afflicted with, (and how far it may suffer with us, we know not,) yet for certain has less joy in us, in proportion as we are less obedient. You know not by sinning what blows you give the heart of CHRIST. And take this as one incentive to obedience; if he retain the same heart towards you which he had on earth, endeavour you to have the same heart towards him on earth, which you hope to have in heaven.

4. In all miseries and distresses, you know where to have a Friend to help and pity you; one, whose nature, office, interest, relation, all, engage him to your succour. You will find men, even friends, to be often unreasonable, and their bowels in many cases shut up: well, say to them all, " If you will not pity me, I know one that will; one in heaven, whose heart is touched with the feeling of all my infirmities,' and I will go and bemoan myself to him. 'Come boldly,' to lay open your complaints, and ` you shall find grace and mercy to help in time of need.' "