

“ of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation, which at first began to be spoken to us by the Lord, and “ was confirmed to us by them that heard him, God also bearing “ them witness?” Heb. ii. 2, 3, 4. But if they be certain, yet they are not near; it will be a long time before they come. Poor soul! how dost thou cheat thyself? It may be not by twenty parts so long a time as thy own fancy draws it forth for thee; thou art not certain of the next moment.

And suppose what thou imaginest: What are twenty or forty years when they are past? yea, what are a thousand years to vast eternity? Go trifle away a few days more, sleep out a few nights more, and then lie down in the dust; it will not be long ere the trump of God shall awaken thee, and thine eyes shall behold Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, and then you will know the price of this sin. Oh, therefore, if there be any sense of eternity upon you, any pity or love for yourselves in you; if you have any concernments more than the beasts that perish, despise not your own offered mercies, slight not the richest gift that ever was yet opened to the world; and a sweeter cannot be opened to all eternity.



## SERMON V.

### Of CHRIST'S wonderful Person.

JOHN i. 14.

*And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, &c.*

**Y**OU have heard the covenant of redemption opened. The work therein propounded by the Father, and consented to by the Son, is such as infinitely exceeds the power of any mere creature to perform. He that undertakes to satisfy God, by obedience for man's sin, must himself be God; and he that performs such a perfect obedience, by doing, and suffering all that the law required, in our room, must be man. These two natures must be united in one person, else there could not be a concourse or co-operation of either nature in his mediatory works. How these natures are united, in the wonderful person of our *Immanuel*, is the first part of the great mystery of godliness:\* a subject studied

\* The incarnation is the miracle of miracles; a testimony against unbelievers, Isa. vii. 14. and a document to believers. None can declare his generation, Isa. liii. 8. Neither can any declare his incarnation, his name is secret, Judges xiii. 18. Won-

and adored by angels! and the mystery thereof is wrapped up in this text. Wherein we have,

*First*, The incarnation of the Son of God plainly asserted.

*Secondly*, That assertion strongly confirmed.

(1.) In the assertion we have three parts.

1. The *Person assuming*, ὁ Λόγος, the Word,\* *i. e.* the second Person or Subsistent in the most glorious Godhead, called the Word, either because he is the scope or principal matter, both of the prophetic and promissory word; or because he expounds and reveals the mind and will of God to men, as verse 18. The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared or expounded him.

2. The *Nature assumed*, σαφξ, Flesh, *i. e.* the entire human nature, consisting of a true human soul and body. For so this word σαφξ, in Rom. iii. 20. and the Hebrew word פֶּשֶׁת which answers to it, by an usual *Metonymy* of a part for the whole, is used, Gen. vi. 12. And the word *Flesh* is rather used here, than *Man*, on purpose to enhance the admirable condescension and abasement of Christ; there being more of vileness, weakness, and opposition to spirit in this word, than in that, as is pertinently noted by some. Hence the whole nature is denominated by that part, and called flesh.

3. The *assumption* itself, ἐγένετο, he was made; not *fuit*, he was, (as Socinus would render it, designing thereby to overthrow the existence of Christ's glorified body now in heaven) but *factus est*, it was made, *i. e.* he took or assumed the true human nature (called flesh,† for the reason before rendered) into the unity of his divine person, with all its integral parts and essential properties; and so was made, or became a true and real man, by that assumption. The apostle speaking of the same act, Heb. ii. 16. uses another word, *He took on him*, ἐπιλαμβανεται, fitly rendered *he took on him*, or he assumed; which assuming, though inchoative, it was the work of the whole Trinity, God the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit, forming or creating that nature; as if three sisters should make a garment betwixt them, which only one of them wears: yet, terminative, it was the act of the Son only: it was he

derful, Isa. ix. 6. A name that no man knoweth, *viz.* perfectly, but himself. The Trinity is the greatest, the incarnation the next mystery. *Norton's Orthodox Evangelist*, p. 58.

\* Word, a real substance, or person; and not a word, spoken or uttered. *Fulgent*. Book I.

† The Evangelist chose to use the word, *Flesh*, instead of *Man*, that it might the more appear how far the Word that was God, humbled himself, when he was made *Flesh*. For there is manifestly more of *Vileness*, and greater opposition to *Spirit* implied in the word *Flesh* than in the word *Man*. *Maccovius's Common Places*

only that was *made flesh*. And when it is said, he was made flesh, misconceive not, as if there was a mutation of the Godhead into flesh; for this was performed, \* “not by changing what he was, “but by assuming what he was not,” as Augustine well expresseth it. As when the scripture, in a like expression, saith, “He was “made sin,” 2 Cor. v. 21. and made a curse, Gal. iii. 13. the meaning is not, that he was turned into sin, or into a curse; no more may we think here the Godhead was turned into flesh, and lost its own being and nature, because it is said he was made flesh. This is the sum of the assertion.

(2.) This assertion [“that the word was made flesh,”] is strongly confirmed. He “dwelt among us,” and we saw his glory. This was no phantasm, but a most real and indubitable thing. For, *εσκηνωσεν εν ημιν*, pitched his tent, or tabernacled with us. And we are eye-witnesses of it. Parallel to that, 1 John i. 1, 2, 3. “That “which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we “have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our “hands have handled, of the Word of life, &c. declare we unto “you.” Hence note,

*Doct. That Jesus Christ did really assume the true and perfect nature of man, into a personal union with his divine nature, and still remains true God, and true man, in one person for ever.*

The proposition contains one of the deepest mysteries of godliness, † 1 Tim. iii. 16. A mystery, by which apprehension is dazzled, invention astonished, and all expression swallowed up. If ever the tongues of angels were desirable to explicate any word of God, they are so here. Great is the interest of words in this doctrine. We walk upon the brink of danger. The least tread awry may ingulph us in the bogs of error. Arius would have been content, if the council of Nice would but have gratified him in a letter, *ομολοσιος*, and *συνοικισιος*. The Nestorians also desired but a letter, *Θεοδοζιος*, *Δεσιπολιος*. These seemed but small and modest requests, but, if granted, had proved no small prejudice to Jesus Christ, and his truths. I desire therefore the reader would, with greatest

\* *Non mutando quod erat, sed assumendo, quod non erat.* Aug.

† The incarnation is God's work, whereby the Son of God, (according to the œconomy of the divine counsel of the Father, of the Son, and of the holy Spirit) humbling and abasing himself, took from the Virgin Mary, by the power and efficacy of the holy Spirit upon her; real, entire, perfect, holy Flesh; yet so as that that Flesh had no proper subsistence without the Son of God, but was really borne and carried about by him; the two entire natures being united among themselves, without any change of the one into the other, without confusion, without division, and inseparably, &c. Whence is constituted the person of Christ, God-man.—  
*Synopsis purioris Theo.*

attention of mind, apply himself to these truths. It is a doctrine hard to understand, and dangerous to mistake. I am really of his mind that said,\* ‘It is better not touch the bottom, than not keep within the circle.’ *Melius est nescire centrum, quam non tenere circum.* He did assume a true human body; that is plainly asserted, Phil. ii. 7, 8, &c. Heb. ii. 14, 16. In one place it is called taking on him the seed of Abraham, and in the text, *flesh*. He did also assume a true human soul, this is undeniable by its operations, passions, and expiration at last, Matth. xxvi. 38. and xxvii. 50. And that both these natures make but one person, is as evident from Rom. i. 3, 4, “Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” So Rom. ix. 5. “Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” But that you may have a sound and clear understanding of this mystery, I will (1.) Open the nature; (2.) The effects; and (3.) The reasons or ends of this wonderful union.

*First*, The nature of this union. There are three illustrious and dazzling unions in scripture: that of three persons in one God, *Essentially*. That of two distinct natures, and persons; by one spirit *Mystically*: and this of two distinct natures in one person, *Hypostatically*. This is my task to open at this time: and, for the more distinct and perspicuous management thereof, I shall speak to it both *negatively* and *positively*.

*The nature of the hypostatical union opened.*

1. *Negatively*. Think not when Christ assumed our nature, that it was united *consubstantially*, so as the three persons in the Godhead are united among themselves. They all have but one and the same nature and will; but in Christ are two distinct natures and wills, though but one person.

*Not consubstantially.*

2. Nor yet that they are united *Physically*, as soul and body are united in one person; for death actually dissolves that; but this is indissoluble. So that when his soul expired, and his body was interred, both soul and body were still united to the second person as much as ever.

*Not physically.*

3. Nor yet is it such a *mystical union*, as is between Christ and believers. Indeed that is a glorious

*Not mystically.*

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\* Reason (saith one) can never shew itself more reasonable, than in ceasing to reason about things which are above reason. Whatsoever is concealed from us, that we are not to pry into. But we are not to overlook what is plain and manifest. *Prosper.*

union; but though believers are said to be in Christ, and Christ in them, yet they are not one person with him. They are not christed into Christ, or godded into God, as blasphemous *Familists* speak.

*Secondly, Positively.* But this assumption of which I speak, is that whereby the second Person in the Godhead did take the human nature into a personal union with himself, by virtue whereof the manhood subsists in the second person, yet without confusion, both making but one person, Θεανθρωπος, or *Immanuel*, God with us.

So that though we truly ascribe a two-fold nature to Christ, yet not a double person; \* for the human nature of Christ never subsisted separately and distinctly, by any personal subsistence of its own, as it doth in all other men, but from the first moment of conception, subsisted in union with the second person.

To explicate this mystery more particularly, let it be considered;

*First,* The human nature was united to the second person *miraculously* and extraordinarily, being supernaturally framed in the womb of the Virgin, by the over-shadowing power of the Highest, Luke i. 34, 35. By reason whereof it may truly and properly be said to be the fruit of the womb, not of the loins of men, nor by man. And this was necessary to exempt the assumed nature from the stain and pollution of Adam's sin, which it wholly escaped; inasmuch as he received it not, as all others do, in the way of ordinary generation, wherein original sin is propagated: but this being extraordinarily produced, was a most pure and holy thing, Luke i. 35. And indeed this perfect shining holiness, in which it was produced, was absolutely necessary, both in order to its union with the divine Person, and the design of that union; which was both to satisfy for, and to sanctify us. The two natures could not be conjoined in the person of Christ, had there been the least taint of sin upon the human nature. For God can have no fellowship with sin, much less be united to it. Or, supposing such a conjunction with our sinful nature, yet he being a sinner himself, could never satisfy for the sins of others; nor could any unholy thing ever make us holy. "Such an High-priest therefore became us " as is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," Heb. vii. 26. And such an one he must needs be, whom the Holy Ghost produces in such a peculiar way, το αγιον, that holy thing.

*Secondly,* As it was produced miraculously, so it was assumed *integrally*; that is to say, Christ took a complete and perfect human

\* The human nature is not, ιδιοσυστατος subsisting of itself, nor did the human nature exist before it was assumed; but so soon as the flesh existed, it was the flesh of the Word of God. And so the person of Christ is one, in which there are two distinct things, but not two distinct persons. *Greg. Naz. in Theodoret, Dialogue 2.*

soul and body, with all and every faculty and member pertaining to it. And this was necessary (as both \* Austin and † Fulgentius have well observed) that thereby he might heal the whole nature of that leprosy of sin, which hath seized and infected every member and faculty. Παντα ανελαβεν να παντα αγιαζη. "He assumed all, to sanctify all;" as Damascen expresseth it. He designed a perfect recovery, by sanctifying us wholly in soul, body, and spirit; and therefore assumed the whole in order to it.

*Thirdly*, He assumed our nature, as with all its integral parts, so with all its *sinless infirmities*. And therefore it is said of him, Heb. ii. 17. "That it behoved him," κατα παντα ομοιωθηναι, according to all things (that is, all things natural, not formally sinful, † as it is limited by the same apostle, Heb. iv. 15.) to be made like unto his brethren. But here our divines so carefully distinguish infirmities into *personal* and *natural*. Personal infirmities are such as befall particular persons, from particular causes, such as dumbness, blindness, lameness, leprosy, monstrosities, and other deformities. These it was no way necessary that Christ should, nor did he at all assume; but the natural ones, such as hunger, thirst, weariness, sweating, bleeding, mortality, &c. which though they are not in themselves formally and intrinsically sinful; yet are they the effects and consequents of sin. They are so many marks, that sin hath left of itself upon our natures. And on that account Christ is said to be sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh," Rom. viii. 3. Wherein the gracious condescension of Christ for us is marvellously signalized, that he would not assume our innocent nature, as it was in Adam before the fall, while it stood in all its primitive glory and perfection; but after sin had quite defaced, ruined, and spoiled it.

*Fourthly*, The human nature is so united with the divine, as that each nature still retains its own essential properties distinct. § And this distinction is not, nor can be lost by that union. So that

\* *Aug. de Civit. Dei.* lib. 10. cap. 27. p. 586.

† *Fulgent. ad Tra.* l. 1. p. 251. *Damasc.* lib. 3. cap. 20.

‡ The natural pollution and original defilement of sin, which cleaves to human nature in general, could not infect the human nature of Christ, because the Holy Spirit, according to his own manner of working, had made it absolutely undefiled and impeccable, or, incapable of committing sin: and such a perfect and sinless nature it behoved to be, in which our sins, with their defilement and guilt, were to be done away. *Trel. Instit.* p. 58.

§ By this union of the human with the divine nature, the human nature is not raised to the same perfection with the divine, nor changed into it, nor confounded with it; as if what is any way peculiar to the divine, were communicated to the human nature: but that the one always did, and doth, remain totally distinct from the other; the human, to wit, consisting of a finite body, and of a soul, the same, as to substance and essential powers, with other men's. *Bradshaw on Justification,* p. 79.

the two understandings, wills, powers, &c. *viz.* The divine and human, are not confounded; but a line of distinction runs betwixt them still in this wonderful person. It was the heresy of the Eutychians, condemned by the council of Chalcedon, to affirm, that there was no distinction betwixt the two natures in Christ. Against whom that council determined, that they were united *ασυγχυτως*, without any immutation or confusion.

*Fifthly*, The union of the two natures in Christ, as an *inseparable union*; so that from the first moment thereof, there never was, nor to eternity shall be, any separation of them.

*Doubt.* If you ask how the union remained betwixt them, when Christ's human soul and body were separated from each other upon the cross? Is not death the dissolution of the union betwixt soul and body?

*Resolution.* True, the natural union betwixt his soul and body was dissolved by death for a time, but this hypostatical union remained even then as entire and firm as ever: for, though his soul and body were divided from each other, yet neither of them from the divine nature. Divines assist our conception of this mystery, by an apt illustration.\* A man that holds in his hand a sword sheathed, when he pleaseth, draws forth the sword; but still holds that in one hand, and the sheath in the other, and then sheaths it again, still holding it in his hand: so when Christ died, his soul and body retained their union with the divine nature, though not (during that space) one with another.

And thus you are to form and regulate your conceptions of this great mystery. Some adumbrations and imperfect similitudes of it may be found in nature. Among which some † commend that union which the soul and body have with each other; they are of different natures, yet both make one individual man. Others ‡ find fault with this, because both these united make but one complete human nature; whereas, in Christ's person, there are two natures, and commend to us a more perfect emblem, *viz.* That of the *Cyon* and the tree or stock, which have two natures, yet make but one tree. But then we must remember that the *Cyon* wants a root of its own, which is an integral part, but Christ assumed our nature integrally. This defect is by others § supplied in the *Mi-*

\* *Tolletus* gives us a fine illustration of it; "Even as a man, (says he) holding a sword sheathed, when he pleaseth, draws forth the sword; but still holds that in one hand, and the sheath in the other, [and then sheaths it again, still holding it in his hand:] so the Divine Person separated the soul from the human body, as it were a sword drawn out of its sheath, but still he held both united to himself; but by the resurrection he re-joined the soul to the body, as when one puts the sword in the scabbard."

† Justin Martyr.

‡ Alex. Alex.

§ Roberts of the covenant.

*misletoe* and the *Oak*, which have different natures; and the *Misletoe* subsists in union with the *Oak*, still retaining the difference of nature; and though making but one tree, yet bears different fruits. And so much to the first thing, namely, the nature of this union.

*Secondly*, For the effects, or immediate results of this marvellous union, let these three be well considered. *The results of the hypostatical union.*

1. The two natures being thus united in the person of the Mediator, by virtue whereof the properties of each nature are attributed, and do truly agree in the whole person; so that it is proper to say, the Lord of glory was crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 8. and the blood of God redeemed the Church, Acts xx. 28. that Christ was both in heaven, and in the earth at the same time, John iii. 13.

Yet we do not believe that one nature doth transfuse or impart its properties to the other,\* or that it is proper to say the divine nature suffered, bled, or died; or the human is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent; but that the properties of both natures, are so ascribed to the person, that it is proper to affirm any of them of him in the concrete, though not abstractly. The right understanding of this would greatly assist, in teaching the true sense of the forenamed, and many other dark passages in the scriptures.

2. Another fruit of this hypostatical union, is the singular advancement of the human nature in Christ, far beyond and above what it is capable of in any other person, † it being hereby replenished and filled with an unparalleled measure of divine graces and excellencies; in which respect he is said to be “anointed above, or before his fellows,” Psal. xiv. 8. and so becomes the object of adoration and divine worship, Acts vii. 59. This the Socinians oppugn with this argument: He that is worshipped with a divine worship, as he is Mediator, is not so worshipped as God; but Christ is worshipped as Mediator. But we say, that to be worshipped as Mediator, and as God, are not opposite, but the one is necessarily included in the other; and therein is further included the *ratio formalis sub qua* ‡ of that divine religious worship.

3. Hence, in the last place, follows, as another excellent fruit

\* The properties of both natures may be attributed to the whole person of Christ, in the concrete; the Son of man, who is a Person consisting of two natures, is everywhere present, is eternal, is adorable, that is, he is to be adored according to his divine nature, to which these properties (of omnipresence, eternity, praise-worthiness) are applicable: we adore indeed the Deity incarnate, but the Divinity itself is the only perfect object of our worship.

† The human nature being thus assumed above all other created natures, is, by virtue of this assumption, lifted up to the highest possible pitch of dignity; Heb. i. 4, 5, 6. *Bradshaw on Justification*, p. 79.

‡ The formal ground upon which the worship of Christ, as Mediator, is founded.

of this union, *The concourse and co-operation of each nature to his mediatory works; for in them he acts according to both natures: the human nature doing what is human, viz: suffering, sweating, bleeding, dying; and his divine nature stamping all these with infinite value; and so both sweetly concur unto one glorious work and design of mediation.* Papists generally deny that he performs any of these mediatory works as God, but only as man; but how boldly do they therein contradict these plain scriptures? See 2 Cor. v. 10. Heb. ix. 14, 15. And so much as to the second thing propounded, viz. the fruits of this union.

*Thirdly,* The last thing to be opened is the grounds and reasons of this assumption. And we may say, touching that, (1.) That the human nature was not assumed to any intrinsical perfection of the God-head, not to make that human nature itself perfect. The divine did not assume the human nature necessarily, but voluntarily; not out of indigence, but bounty; not because it was to be perfected by it, but to perfect it, by causing it to lie as a pipe, to the infinite all-filling fountain of grace and glory, of which it is the great receptacle. And so, consequently, to qualify and prepare him for a full discharge of his mediatorship, in the offices of our Prophet, Priest, and King. Had he not this double nature in the unity of his person, he could not have been our Prophet: For, as God, he knows the mind and will of God, John i. 18. and iii. 13. and as man he is fitted to impart it suitably to us, Deut. xviii. 15, 16, 17, 18. compared with Acts xx. 22.

As Priest, had he not been man, he could have shed no blood; and if not God, it had been no adequate value for us, \* Heb. ii. 17. Acts iii. 28.

As King, had he not been man, he had been an heterogeneous, and so no fit head for us. And if not God, he could neither rule nor defend his body the Church.

These then were the designs and ends of that assumption.

*Use 1. Let all Christians rightly inform their minds in this truth of so great concernment in religion, and hold it fast against all subtle adversaries, that would wrest it from them.* The learned Hooker observes, that the dividing of Christ's person, which is but one, and the confounding of his natures, which are two, hath been the occasion of those errors, which have so greatly disturbed the peace of the church. The Arians denied his deity, levelling him with

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\* He made satisfaction in his human nature; but then the worth, the excellency, efficacy and application of that satisfaction flow from the divine nature. *Ames, Bell. Eneru. lib. 5.*

other mere men. The Apollinarians maimed his humanity. The Sabellians affirmed, that the Father and Holy Ghost were incarnated as well as the Son; and were forced, upon that absurdity, by another error, *viz.* denying the three distinct persons in the Godhead, and affirming they were but three names. The Eutychians confounded both natures in Christ, denying any distinction of them. The Seleusians affirmed, that he unclothed himself of his humanity when he ascended, and hath no human body in heaven. The Nestorians so rent the two names of Christ asunder, as to make two distinct persons of them.

*But ye (beloved) have not so learned Christ.* Ye know he is, (1.) True and very God; (2.) True and very man; that, (3.) these two natures make but one person, being united inseparably; (4.) that they are not confounded or swallowed up one in another, but remain still distinct in the person of Christ. Hold ye the sound words which cannot be condemned. Great things hang upon all these truths. O suffer not a stone to be loosed out of the foundation.

*Use 2. Adore the love of the Father, and the Son, who bid so high for your souls, and at this rate were contented you should be recovered.*

1. The love of the Father is herein admirably conspicuous, who so vehemently willed our salvation, that he was content to degrade the darling of his soul to so vile and contemptible a state, which was, upon the matter, an undoing to him, in point of reputation; as the apostle intimates, Phil. ii. 7. If two persons be at a variance, and the superior, who also is the wronged person, begin to stoop first, and say, you have deeply wronged me, yea, your blood is not able to repair the wrongs you have done me: however, such is my love to you, and willingness to be at peace with you, that I will part with what is most dear to me in all the world, for peace-sake; yea, though I stoop below myself, and seem, as it were, to forget my own relation and endearments to my own son, I will not suffer such a breach betwixt me and you. John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."

2. And how astonishing is the love of Christ, that would make such a stoop as this to exalt us! \* Oh, it is ravishing to think, he should pass by a more excellent and noble species of creatures, refusing the angelic nature, Heb. ii. 16. to take flesh; and not to solace and disport himself in it neither, nor experience sensitive pleasures in the body; for, as he needed them not, being at the fountain-head of the highest joys, so it was not at all in his design,

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\* No body raises another lying low, without first stooping down, and bowing himself to the ground. *Nierom.*

but the very contrary, even to make himself a subject capable of sorrows, wounds, and tears.\* It was, as the apostle elegantly expresseth it, in Heb. ii. 9. *οπως υπερ παντος γευσηται θανατου*; that he might sensibly taste what relish death hath, and what bitterness is in those pangs and agonies. Now, Oh that you would get your hearts suitably impressed and affected with these high impressures of the love both of the Father and the Son! How is the courage of some noble Romans celebrated in history, for the brave adventures they made for the commonwealth; but they could never stoop as Christ did, being so infinitely below him in personal dignity.

*Use 3.* And here infinite wisdom has also left a famous and everlasting mark of itself; which invites, yea, even chains the eyes of angels and men to itself.† Had there been a general council of angels, to advise upon a way of recovering poor sinners, they would all have been at an everlasting demur and loss about it. It could not have entered their thoughts, (though they are intelligencers, and more sagacious creatures) that ever mercy, pardon, and grace, should find such a way as this to issue forth from the heart of God to the hearts of sinners. Oh, how wisely is the method of our recovery laid! so that Christ may be well called, “the power and wisdom of God,” 1 Cor. i. 24; forasmuch as in him the divine wisdom is more glorified than in all the other works of God, upon which he hath impressed it. Hence it is, that some of the schoolmen affirm, (though I confess myself unsatisfied with it) that the incarnation of Christ was in itself so glorious a demonstration of God’s wisdom and power, and thereupon so desirable in itself, that though man had not sinned, yet Christ would have been made man.

*Use 4.* Hence also we infer *the incomparable sweetness of the Christian religion, that shews poor sinners such a fair foundation to rest their trembling consciences upon.* While poor distressed souls look to themselves, they are perpetually puzzled. That is the cry of a distressed natural conscience, Micah vi. 6. “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?” the Hebrew is *אקום יתוה* how shall I prevent or anticipate the Lord?‡ and so Montanus renders

\* The Son of God therefore took flesh, that he might be capable of suffering in human nature, which he could not have done in the Divine, which is incapable of suffering. *Theod.*

† It must surpass human, or even angelical understandings, to conceive, or, if conceived, to hope for such a deliverer: wherefore, if a sinner, sensible of the divine malediction due to his sins, were left to himself, by searching to find out such relief, the more he laboured in the search, the more would he throw himself headlong into a boundless abyss of horror and desperation. *Bradshaw on Justification*, p. 74.

‡ [*Ædom*] Antivertit, anticipavit, obvenit. *Buxtorf.*

it, *in quo præoccupabo Dominum?* Conscience sees God arming himself with wrath, to avenge himself for sin; cries out, Oh, how shall I prevent him; if he would accept the fruit of my body, (those dear pledges of nature,) for the sin of my soul, he should have them. But now we see God coming down in flesh, and so intimately united our flesh to himself, that it hath no proper subsistence of its own, but is united with the divine person: hence it is easy to imagine what worth and value must be in that blood; and how eternal love, springing forth triumphantly from it, flourishes into pardon, grace, and peace. Here is a way in which the sinner may see justice and mercy kissing each other, and the latter exercised freely, without prejudice to the former. All other consciences, through the world, lie either in a deep sleep in the devil's arms, or else are rolling (sea sick) upon the waves of their own fears and dismal presages. Oh, happy are they that have dropped anchor on this ground, and not only know they have peace, but why they have it!

*Use 5. Of how great concernment is it, that Christ should have union with our particular persons, as well as with our common nature?* For by this union with our nature alone, never any man was, or can be saved. Yea, let me add, that this union with our natures, is utterly in vain to you, and will do you no good, except he have union with your persons by faith also. It is indeed infinite mercy, that God is come so near you, as to dwell in your flesh; and that he hath fixed upon such an excellent method to save poor sinners. And hath he done all this? is he indeed come home, even to your own doors, to seek peace? doth he veil his unsupportable glory under flesh, that he might treat the more familiarly? and yet do you refuse him, and shut your hearts against him? then hear one word, and let thine ears tingle at the sound of it: Thy sin is hereby aggravated beyond the sin of devils, who never sinned against a mediator in their own nature; who never despised, or refused, because indeed, they were never offered terms of mercy, as you are.

And I doubt not but the devils themselves, who now tempt you to reject, will, to all eternity, upbraid your folly for rejecting this great salvation, which in this excellent way is brought down, even to your own doors.

*Use 6. If Jesus Christ has assumed our nature, then he is sensibly touched with the infirmities that attend it, and so hath pity and compassion for us, under all our burdens.* And indeed this was one end of his assuming it, that he might be able to have compassion on us, as you read, Heb. ii. 17, 18. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be  
"a merciful and faithful High-priest, in things pertaining to God,

“to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” O what a comfort is this to us, that he who is our High-Priest in heaven, hath our nature on him, to enable him to take compassion on us!

*Use 7.* Hence we see, *to what a height God intends to build up the happiness of man, in that he hath laid the foundation thereof so deep, in the incarnation of his own Son.*

They that intend to build high, use to lay the foundation low. The happiness and glory of our bodies, as well as souls, are founded in Christ's taking our flesh upon him: for, therein, as in a model or pattern, God intended to shew what in time he resolves to make of our bodies; for he will μετασχηματισειν, transform our vile bodies, and make them one day conformable to the glorious body of Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 21. This flesh was therefore assumed by Christ, that in it might be shewn, as in a pattern, how God intends to honour and exalt it. And indeed, a greater honour cannot be done to the nature of man, than what is already done, by this grace of union; nor are our persons capable of higher glory, than what consists in their conformity to this glorious head. Indeed the flesh of Christ will ever have a distinct glory from ours in heaven, by reason of this union; for being the body which the Word assumed, it is two ways advanced singularly above the flesh and blood of all other men, *viz. subjectively, and objectively*: Subjectively, it is the flesh and blood of God, Acts xx. 28. and so hath a distinct and incommunicable glory of its own. And objectively, it is the flesh and blood which all the angels and saints adore. But though in these things it be supereminently exalted, yet it is both the medium and pattern of all that glory which God designs to raise us to.

*Use 8.* Lastly, *How wonderful a comfort is it, that he who dwells in our flesh is God?* What joy may not a poor believer make out of this? what comfort one made out of it, I will give you in his own words, “I see it a work of God, (saith he) that experiences are all lost, when summonses of improbation, to prove our charters of Christ to be counterfeit, are raised against poor souls in their heavy trials. But let me be a sinner, and worse than the chief of sinners, yea, a guilty devil, I am sure my well-beloved is God, and my Christ is God. And when I say my Christ is God, I have said all things, I can say no more. I would I could build as much on this, *My Christ is God*, as it would bear: I might lay all the world upon it.”

God and man in one person! Oh! thrice happy conjunction! As man, he is full of experimental sense of our infirmities, wants, and burdens; and, as God, he can support and supply them all.

The aspect of faith upon this wonderful Person, how relieving, how reviving, how abundantly satisfying is it? God will never divorce the believing soul, and its comfort, after he hath married our nature to his own Son, by the hypostatical, and our persons also, by the blessed mystical union.

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## SERMON VI.

Of the Authority by which CHRIST, as Mediator, acted.

JOHN vi. 27.

*For him hath God the Father sealed.*

**Y**OU have heard Christ's compact, or agreement with the Father, in the covenant of redemption; as also what the Father did, in pursuance of the ends thereof, in giving his Son out of his bosom, &c. also what the Son hath done towards it, in assuming flesh. But though the glorious work be thus far advanced, yet all he should act in that assumed body, had been invalid and vain, without a due call, and commission from the Father, so to do: which is the import of the words now before you.

This scripture is a part of Christ's excellent reply to a self-ended generation, who followed him, not for any spiritual excellencies that they saw in him, or soul-advantages they expected by him, but for bread. Instead of making his service their meat and drink, they only served him, that they might eat and drink. *Self* is a thing may creep into the best hearts and actions; but it only predominates in the hypocrite. These people had sought Christ from place to place, and having at last found him, they salute him with an impertinent compliment, "Rabbi, whence camest thou hither?" verse 25. Christ's reply is partly *dissuasive*, and partly *directive*. He dissuades them from putting the secondary and subordinate, in the place of the principal and ultimate end; not to prefer their bodies to their souls, their fleshly accommodations to the glory of God. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth." Wherein he doth not take them off from their lawful labours and callings; but he dissuades them, *first*, from minding those things too intently: and, *secondly*, he dissuades them from that odious sin of making religion but a pretence for the belly.

And it is partly *directive*, and that in the main end and business of life. "But labour for that meat which endureth to eternal life;"