

We can converse with friends only by imagination. But by faith we make Christ present with us, and delight in him.

(2.) There is thanksgiving towards him. That love which is fixed upon the person of Christ will break forth in great thankfulness, which is one peculiar act of this ordinance. The cup which we bless, or give thanks for.

(3.) It will greatly incline the heart to keep his word. If ye are my disciples, 'if ye love me, keep my commandments.' Every act of love fixed upon the person of Christ, gives a new spring of obedience to all the ordinances of Christ: and the truth is, there is no keeping up our hearts unto obedience to ordinances, but by renewed acts of obedience upon the person of Christ: this will make the soul cry, When shall I be in an actual observation of Christ's ordinance, who hath thus loved me, and washed me with his own blood, that hath done such great things for me?

This is the end of the death of Christ, which concerns our faith and love; the end of commemoration, or calling to remembrance.

There is an end of profession also; which is, 'to shew forth the Lord's death till he come.' But this must be spoken to at some other time. If we come to the practice of these things, we shall find them great things to call over; viz. the whole frame of the heart of Christ in his death, and his death itself, and our own concern therein, and the great example he hath set unto us. Some of them, I hope, may abide upon our hearts and spirits for our use.

DISCOURSE IV.*

As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.—1 COR. xi. 26.

ONE end, you see, of this great ordinance, is to shew the Lord's death, to declare it, to represent it, to shew it forth, hold it forth; the word is thus variously rendered. And in the especial ends of this ordinance it is, that we have special communion with our Lord Jesus Christ.

* Delivered December 24, 1669.

Now there are two ways whereby we shew forth the Lord's death; the one is, the way of representation to ourselves; and the other is, a way of profession unto others.

I. The way of representation to ourselves. The work of representing Christ aright to the soul, is a great work. God and men are agreed in it; and therefore God, when he represents Christ, his design is to represent him to the faith of men. Men that have not faith have a great desire to have Christ represented to their fancy and imagination; and therefore, when the way of representing Christ to the faith of men was lost among them, the greatest part of their religion was taken up in representing Christ to their fancy. They would make pictures and images of his cross, resurrection, ascension, and every thing he did.

There are three ways whereby God represents Christ to the faith of believers; the one is, by the word of the gospel itself, as written; the second is, by the ministry of the gospel, and preaching of the word; and the third in particular is, by this sacrament, wherein we represent the Lord's death to the faith of our own souls.

1. God doth it by the word itself. Hence are those descriptions that are given of Christ in Scripture, to represent him desirable to the souls of men. The great design of the book of Canticles consists, for the most part in this, in a mystical, allegorical description of the graces and excellencies of the person of Christ, to render him desirable to the souls of believers; as in the fifth chapter, from the ninth verse to the end, there is nothing but that one subject. And it was a great promise made to them of old, Isa. xxxiii. 17. 'Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty.' The promises of the Old Testament are much spent in representing the person of Christ beautiful, desirous, and lovely, to the faith of believers. And you will see in 2 Cor. iii. 18. what is the end of the gospel; 'We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' The gospel is the glass here intended; and looking into the glass, there is an image appears in it, not our own, but the representation the gospel makes of Jesus Christ is the image that appears in the glass. The work and design of the gospel is to make a representation of Christ unto us; as Christ

makes a representation of the Father, and therefore he is called his image, the 'image of the invisible God.' Why so? Because all the glorious properties of the invisible God are represented to us in Christ, and we looking upon the image of Christ in this glass, that is the representation made of him in the gospel; it is the effectual means whereby the Spirit of God transforms us into his image.

This is the first way whereby God doth this great work of representing Christ unto the faith of men, which men having lost, have made it their whole religion to represent Christ unto their fancy.

2. The second way is, by the ministry of the word. The great work of the ministry of the word is to represent Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul tells us, Gal. iii. 1. 'O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you?' He is 'depictus crucifixus,' crucified before their eyes. How was this? not before their bodily eyes; but the apostle had in his preaching made such a lively representation unto their faith of the death of Christ, that he was as one painted before them. One said well on this text, 'Of old the apostles did not preach Christ by painting, but they painted him by preaching;' they did in so lively a manner represent him.

Abraham's servant, in the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis, that was sent to take a wife for his son Isaac, is by all granted to be, if not a type, yet a resemblance of the ministers of the gospel, that go forth to prepare a bride for Christ: and what does he do? truly he is a great example; when he came to the opportunity, though he had many things to divert him, yet he would not be diverted. There was set meat before him to eat, but he said, 'I will not eat, till I have told my errand.' Nothing should divert the ministers of the gospel, no not their necessary meat, when they have an opportunity of dealing with souls on behalf of Christ. What course does Abraham's servant take? He saith, 'I am Abraham's servant; and the Lord has blessed my master greatly, and he is become great, and he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses.' What is all this to Isaac? He was to take a wife for Isaac, not for

Abraham. He goes on; 'And Sarah, my master's wife, bare a son to my master when she was old, and unto him hath he given all that he hath.' The way to procure this wife for Isaac was to let them know, that this great man, Abraham, had given all he had to Isaac. And it is the work of ministers of the gospel to let the people know, that God the Father hath given all things into the hands of his Son; they are to represent Christ as Abraham's servant does here his master Isaac, as one who inherited all the goods of Abraham; so Christ is the appointed heir of all things, of the kingdom of heaven, the whole household of God. They are to represent him thus to the souls of men, to make him desirable to them. This is the great work of ministers, who are ambassadors of God; they are sent from God to take a wife for Christ; or to make ready a bride for him from among the children of men.

3. The special way whereby we represent Christ unto our souls through faith, is in the administration of this ordinance, which I will speak to upon the great end of shewing forth the death of the Lord.

Now the former representations were general, this is particular; and I cannot at this time go over particulars. I bless the Lord my soul hath many times admired the wisdom and goodness of God in the institution of this one ordinance, that he took bread and wine for that end and purpose, merely arbitrary, of his own choice, and might have taken any thing else, what he had pleased; that he should fix on the cream of the creation, which is an endless storehouse, if pursued, of representing the mysteries of Christ. When the folly of men goes about to invent ceremonies that they would have significant; when they have found them out, they cannot well tell what they signify. But though I do acknowledge, that all the significancy of this ordinance depends upon the institution, yet there is great wisdom in the fitting of it; the thing was fitted and suited to be made use of to that end and purpose.

One end of the ordinance itself is to represent the death of Christ unto us; and it represents Christ with reference to these five things:

1. It represents him with reference to God's setting him forth. 2. In reference to his own passion. 3. In reference

to his exhibition in the promise. 4. To our participation of him by believing. And, 5. To his incorporation with us in union.

1. The great end of God in reference to Christ as to his death was, his setting of him forth; Rom. iii. 25. 'Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation.' And in the very setting forth of the elements in this ordinance there is a representation of God's setting forth his Son, of giving him out for this work, of giving him up unto it, to be a propitiation.

2. There is a plain representation of his passion, of his suffering and death, and the manner of it. This, with all the concerns of it, I treated of the last Lord's day, under the head of recognition, or calling over the death of Christ, 'Do this in remembrance of me;' and so I shall not again insist upon it.

3. There is a representation of Christ in it, as to the exhibition and tender of him in the promise. Many promises are expressed in invitations, 'Ho! every one that thirsts, come,' take, eat: there is a promise in it. And in the tender that is made even of the sacramental elements, there is the exhibition of Christ in the promise represented to the soul. I told you before, God hath carefully provided to represent Christ unto our faith, and not to our fancy; and therefore there is no outward similitude and figure. We can say concerning this ordinance, with all its representations, as God said concerning his appearing to Moses upon mount Horeb, 'Thou sawest no similitude.' God hath taken care there shall be no natural figure, that all representations made may stand upon institution. Now there is this tender with an invitation. The very elements of the ordinance are a great representation of the proposal of Christ to a believing soul. God holds out Christ as willing to be received, with an invitation. So we shew forth the Lord's death.

4. There is in this ordinance a representation of Christ as to our reception of him; for hereon depends the whole of the matter. God might make a feast of fat things, and propose it to men; but if they do not come to eat, they will not be nourished by it. If you make a tender of payment to a man, if he doth not receive it, the thing remains at a distance, as before. Christ being tendered to a soul, if that

soul doth not receive him, he hath no benefit by it. All these steps you may go. There may be God's exhibition of Christ, and setting of him forth; there may be his own oblation and suffering, laying the foundation of all that is to come; there may be an exhibition of him in the promise, tender, and invitation, and yet, if not received, we have no profit by all these things. What a great representation of this receiving is there in the administration of this ordinance, when every one takes the representation of it to himself, or doth receive it!

5. It gives us a representation of our incorporation in Christ; the allusion whereof, from the nature of the elements' incorporation with us, and being the strength of our lives, might easily be pursued. This is the first way of shewing forth the Lord's death.

II. I shall now speak a few words to the profession of it among ourselves, and to others.

Let me take one or two observations to make way for it.

1. That visible profession is a matter of more importance than most men make of it. As the apostle saith, Rom. x. 10. 'With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' Look, how indispensably necessary believing is unto righteousness, to justification; no less indispensably necessary is confession or profession unto salvation. There is no man that doth believe with his heart unto righteousness, but he will with his mouth (which is there taken by a synecdoche for the whole of our profession), make confession unto salvation. This is that which brings glory to God. The apostle tells us, 2 Cor. ix. 13. that men, 'by the experiment of this ministration, glorify God for your professed subjection to the gospel of Christ.' Glory doth not arise out of obedience, so much as by your profession of it; by the giving them experiment, both of your faith and the reality of it, and that by this fruit of your profession.

Now profession consists in these two things: (1.) In an abstinence from all things with reference to God and his worship, which Christ has not appointed. (2.) In the observation and performance of all things that Christ has appointed.

Men are apt to think, that abstinence from the pollutions

that are in the world through lust, the keeping themselves from the sins and defilements of the world, and inclining to that party that is not of the world, is profession. These things are good; but our profession consists in the observation of Christ's commands, what he requires of us. 'Go teach them.' What to do? 'Whatsoever I have commanded them; and lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.' There is an expression, John xiv. 24. wherein our Saviour puts a trial of our love to him upon the keeping of his sayings; 'He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.' To keep the sayings of Christ, is to observe the commands of Christ, which is the perfect trial of our love to him.

2. There is in this ordinance a special profession of Christ. There is a profession of him against the shame of the world; a profession of him against the curse of the law; and a profession of him against the power of the devil. All our profession doth much centre, or is mightily acted, in this ordinance.

(1.) The death of our Lord Jesus Christ was in the world a shameful death, and that with which Christians were constantly reproached, and which hardly went down with the world. It is a known story, that when the Jesuits preached the gospel, as they call it, in China, they never let them know of the death of Christ, till the congregation 'De Propaganda Fide' commanded it; for the world is mightily scandalized at the shameful death of the cross.

Now in this ordinance we profess the death of Christ, wherein he was crucified, as a malefactor, against all the contempt of the world. It was a great part of the concession of the Christians of old, and there is something in it still: here we come solemnly before God, and all the world, and profess that we expect all our life and salvation from the death of this crucified Saviour.

(2.) In our profession 'we shew forth the death of the Lord' in the celebration of this ordinance, in opposition 'to the curse of the law;' that whereas the curse of the law doth lay claim to us because we are sinners, here we profess that God hath transferred the curse of the law to another who underwent it. So they did with the sacrifices of old, when they had confessed all the sins and iniquities of the

people over the head of the goat, then they sent him away into destruction. So it is in this ordinance; here we confess all our sins and iniquities over the head of this great sacrifice, and profess to the law and all its accusations, that there our sins are charged. 'Who shall lay any thing to our charge? and who shall condemn? It is Christ that died.' We confront the claim of the law, shake off its authority as to its curse, and profess to it that its charge is satisfied.

(3.) We make a profession against the power of Satan: For the great trial of the power and interest of the devil in, unto, and over the souls of men, was in the cross of Jesus Christ. He put his kingdom to a trial, staked his all upon it, and mustered up all the strength he had got, all the aids that the guilt of sin and the rage of the world could furnish him with. 'Now,' saith Christ, 'is your hour and power of darkness.' He comes to try what he can do; and what was the issue of the death of Christ? Why, saith the apostle, 'he spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed over them in his cross.' So that in our celebration of the death of Christ, we do profess against Satan, that his power is broken, that he is conquered, tied to the chariot wheels of Christ, who has disarmed him.

This is the profession we make when we shew forth the Lord's death, against the shame of the world, against the curse of the law, and the power of hell. This is the second general end of this ordinance, and another means it is whereby we have especial communion with Christ in it; which was the thing I aimed at from the words I had chosen. And now I have gone through all I intend upon this subject.

A word or two of use, and I have done.

1. It is a very great honour and privilege to be called of God unto this great work of shewing forth the death of Christ. I think it is as great and glorious a work as any of the children of men can be engaged in, in this world. I have shewed you formerly, how all the acts of the glorious properties of God's nature centre themselves in this infinite, wise, holy product of them, the death of Christ: and that God should call us to represent and shew forth this death. The Lord forgive us where we have not longed to perform this work as we ought; for we have suffered carnal fears

and affections, and any thing else, to keep us off from employing ourselves in this great and glorious work. The grace and mercy of God in this matter is ever to be acknowledged, in that he has called us to this great and glorious work.

2. Then surely it is our duty to answer the mind of God in this work ; and not to attend to it in a cold, careless, and transient manner. But methinks we might rejoice in our hearts when we have thoughts of it, and say within ourselves, ' Come, we will go and shew forth the Lord's death.' The world, the law, and Satan, are conquered by it: blessed be God that has given us an opportunity to profess this. O that our hearts may long after the season for it, and say, When shall the time come ?

3. We may do well to remember what was spoken before concerning the great duty of representing God to our souls, that we may know how to attend to it. I would speak unto the meanest of the flock, to guide our hearts and thoughts which are too ready to wander, and are so unprofitable for want of spiritual fixation. We would fain trust to our affections rather than to our faith, and would rather have them moved, than faith graciously to act itself. And when we fail therein, we are apt to think we fail in our end of the ordinance, because our affections were not moved. Set faith genuinely at work, and we have the end of the ordinance. Let it represent Christ to our souls, as exhibited of God, and given out unto us, as suffering, as tendered to us, and as received and incorporated with us.