

DISCOURSE X.*

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.—Matt. xxviii. 20.

BY 'the end of the world' we are to understand the consummation of all things; when all church work is done, and all church duties are over; when the time comes that we shall pray no more, hear no more, no more administer ordinances; but till then, saith Christ, take this for your life and for your comfort, Do what I command you, and you shall have my presence with you.

There are three things whereby Christ makes good this promise, and is with his church to the end of the world.

First, By his Spirit. 'Wherever,' saith he, 'two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;' Matt. xviii. 20. by his quickening, guiding, directing Spirit, as a Spirit of grace and supplication, as a Spirit of light and holiness, and as a Spirit of comfort.

Secondly, Christ is present with us by his word. Saith the apostle, Col. iii. 16. 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,' or plentifully. And how then? 'Then,' saith he, Eph. iii. 17. 'Christ dwelleth in us by faith.' The word dwelleth in us plentifully, if mixed with faith; and Christ dwelleth in us; he is present with us by his word.

Thirdly, Christ is present with us in an especial manner in this ordinance. One of the greatest engines that ever the devil made use of to overthrow the faith of the church, was by forging such a presence of Christ as is not truly in this ordinance, to drive us off from looking after that presence which is true. I look upon it as one of the greatest engines that ever hell set on work. It is not a corporeal presence; there are innumerable arguments against that; every thing that is in sense, reason, and the faith of a man, overthrows that corporeal presence. But I will remind you of one or two texts wherewith it is inconsistent. The first is that

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in John xvi. 7. 'Nevertheless,' saith our Saviour, 'it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.' The corporeal presence of Christ, and the evangelical presence of the Holy Ghost, as the Comforter, in the New Testament, are inconsistent. I must 'go away, or the Comforter will not come.' But, he so went away as to his presence, as to come again with his bodily presence, as often as the priests call. No, saith Peter, Acts iii. 21. 'The heavens must receive him;' for how long? 'till the time of the restitution of all things.' I go away as to my bodily presence, or the Comforter will not come; and when he is gone away, the heavens must receive him until the time of the restitution of all things. We must not therefore look after such a presence.

I will give you a word or two, what is the presence of Christ with us in this ordinance; what is our duty; and how we may meet with Christ when he is thus present with us; which is the work I have in hand. Christ is present in this ordinance in an especial manner three ways: by representation; by exhibition; by oblation, or sealing.

I. He is present here by representation. So in a low, shadowy way God was present in the tabernacle, in the temple, in the ark and mercy-seat; they had a representation of his glory. But Christ here hath given us a more eminent and clear representation of himself. I will name but two things:

1. A representation of himself, as he is the food of our souls.

2. A representation of himself, as he suffered for our sins.

These are two great ways whereby Christ is represented as the food of our souls, in the matter of the ordinance; and Christ as suffering for our sins is represented in the manner of the ordinance; both by his own appointment. The apostle saith, Gal. iii. 1. 'Jesus Christ was evidently crucified before their eyes.' 'Evidently crucified,' doth not intend particularly this ordinance, but the preaching of the gospel, which gave a delineation, a picture, and image of the crucifixion of Christ unto the faith of believers. But of all things that belong unto the gospel, he is most evidently crucified before our eyes in this ordinance; and it is agreed

on all hands, that Christ is represented unto the soul in this ordinance. How shall we do this? shall we do it by crucifixes, pictures, and images? No; they are all cursed of that God who said, 'Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image.' But that way by which God himself, and Christ himself hath appointed to represent these things unto us, that he blesses, and makes effectual. This way, as I have often shewed, is the way that was chosen by the wisdom and goodness of Jesus Christ; the name of God is upon it; it is blessed unto us, and will be effectual, if we are not wanting to ourselves.

II. Christ is present with us, by way of exhibition; that is, he doth really tender and exhibit himself unto the souls of believers in this ordinance, which the world hath lost, and knows not what to make of it. They exhibit that which they do not contain. This bread doth not contain the body of Christ, or the flesh of Christ; the cup doth not contain the blood of Christ, but they exhibit them; both do as really exhibit them to believers, as they partake of the outward signs. Certainly we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ doth not invite us unto this table for the bread that perishes, for outward food; it is to feed our souls. What do we think then? doth he invite us unto an empty, painted feast? do we deal so with our friends? Here is something really exhibited by Jesus Christ unto us, to receive, besides the outward pledges of bread and wine. We must not think the Lord Jesus Christ deludes our souls with empty shows and appearances. That which is exhibited is himself, it is 'his flesh as meat indeed, and his blood as drink indeed;' it is himself as broken and crucified, that he exhibits unto us. And it is the fault and sin of every one of us if we do not receive him this day, when an exhibition and tender is made unto us, as here by way of food. To what end do we receive it? truly we receive it for these two ends: for incorporation; for nourishment.

1. We receive our food, that it may incorporate and turn into blood and spirits, that it may become one with us; and when we have so done,

2. Our end and design is, that we may be nourished, nature strengthened, comforted, and supported, and we enabled for the duties of life.

Christ doth exhibit himself unto our souls, if we are not wanting unto ourselves, for these two things, incorporation and nourishment; to be received into union, and to give strength unto our souls.

III. Christ is present in this ordinance by way of ob-signation: he comes here to seal the covenant; and therefore the cup is called, 'the new testament in the blood of Christ.' How in the blood of Christ? It is the new covenant that was sealed, ratified, confirmed, and made so stable as you have heard, by the blood of Jesus Christ. For from the foundation of the world, no covenant was ever intended to be established, but it was confirmed by blood; and this covenant is confirmed by the blood of Christ; and he comes and seals the covenant with his own blood in the administration of this ordinance.

Well, if Jesus Christ be thus present by way of representation, exhibition and ob-signation, what is required of us that we may meet him, and be present with him? For it is not our mere coming hither that is a meeting with Christ; it is a work of faith: and there are three acts of faith whereby we may be present with Christ, who is thus present with us.

1. The first is by recognition, answering his representation. As Christ in this ordinance doth represent his death unto us, so we are to remember it, and call it over. Pray consider how things were done formerly in reference unto it. The paschal lamb was an ordinance for remembrance; it is a night to be had in remembrance; and this they should do for a remembrance; and it was to be eaten with bitter herbs. There was once a year a feast wherein all the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of the children of Israel were called to remembrance; and it was to be done by greatly afflicting of their souls. If we intend to call to remembrance the death of Christ, we may do well to do it with some bitter herbs; there should be some remembrance of sin with it, some brokenness of heart for sin, with respect to him who was pierced and broken for us. Our work is to call over and shew forth the death of Christ. Pray, brethren, let us a little consider, whether our hearts be suitably affected with respect to our sins, which were upon Jesus Christ when he died for us, or no; lest we draw nigh unto him with

the outward bodily presence, when our hearts are far from him.

2. If Christ be present with us by way of exhibition, we ought to be present by way of admission. It will not advantage you or me that Christ tenders himself unto us, unless we receive him. This is the great work; herein lies the main work upon all the members of the church. When we are to dispense the word, the first work lies upon ministers; and when the work is sufficiently discharged, they will be a good savour unto God in them that believe, and in them that perish: but in this ordinance, the main work lies upon yourselves. If in the name of Christ we make a tender of him unto you, and he be not actually received, there is but half the work done; so that you are in a peculiar manner to stir up yourselves, as having a more especial interest in this duty, than in any other duty of the church whatsoever; and you may take a better measure of yourselves by your acting in this duty, than of us by our acting in the ministry. Let Christ be received into your hearts by faith and love, upon this particular tender that he assuredly makes in this ordinance of himself unto you; for, as I said, he hath not invited you unto an empty painted feast or table.

3. Know what you come to meet him for, which is, to seal the covenant; solemnly to take upon yourselves again the performance of your part of the covenant. I hope I speak in a deep sense of the thing itself, and that which I have much thought of. This is that which ruins the world, the hearing that God hath made a covenant of grace and mercy, it is preached to them, and declared unto them, and they think to be saved by this covenant, though they themselves do not perform what the covenant requires on their part. What great and glorious words do we speak in the covenant, that God gives himself over unto us to be our God! Brethren, there is our giving ourselves unto God (to answer this) universally and absolutely. If we give ourselves unto the world, and to our lusts, and to self, we are not to expect any benefit by God's covenant of grace. If it be not made up by our sealing of the covenant of grace, or by a universal resignation of ourselves in all that we are and do unto him, we do not meet Jesus Christ; we disappoint him when he comes to seal the covenant. Where is this people,

saith Christ, that would enter into covenant with me? Let it be in our hearts to see him seal the covenant of grace as represented in this ordinance; and to take upon ourselves the performance of what is required of us, by a universal giving up ourselves unto God.

DISCOURSE XI.*

I SHALL now produce some few places of Scripture, one especially, that may administer occasion unto you for the exercise of faith, the great duty required of us at this time. You may do well to think of these words of the prophet concerning Jesus Christ, concerning his sufferings and death, which we are here gathered together in his name to remember. They are,

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.—Isa. liii. 11.

There are two things that the Holy Ghost minds us of in these words :

First, That Jesus Christ was in a great travail of soul to bring forth the redemption and salvation of the church.

Secondly, He minds us that Jesus Christ was satisfied, and much rejoiced in the consideration of the effects and fruits of the travail of his soul.

I shall speak a word to both, and a word to shew you how both these things are called over in this ordinance, both the travail of the soul of Christ, and his satisfaction in the fruit of that travail.

First, Christ was in a great travail of soul to bring forth the redemption and salvation of the church. It was a great work that Christ had to do. It is usually said, we are not saved as the world was made, by a word; but there was travail in it; it is the word whereby the bringing forth of children into the world is expressed; the travail of a woman; and there are three things in that travail: an agony of mind; outcrying for help; and sense of pain; all these things were in the travail of the soul of Christ. I will name the Scriptures to call them to your remembrance.

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