

DISCOURSE VII.*

I SHALL shew briefly what it is to obtain a sacramental part of Jesus Christ in this ordinance of the Lord's supper.

It is a great mystery, and great wisdom and exercise of faith lie in it, how to obtain a participation of Christ. When the world had lost an understanding of this mystery for want of spiritual sight, they contrived a means to make it up, that should be easy on the part of them that did partake, and very prodigious on the part of them that administered. The priest, with a few words, turned the bread into the body of Christ; and the people have no more to do but to put it into their mouths, and so Christ is partaken of. It was the loss of the mystery of faith in the real participation of Christ, that put them on that invention.

Neither is there in this ordinance a naked figure, a naked representation: there is something in the figure, something in the representation, but there is not all in it. When the bread is broken, it is a figure, a representation that the body of Christ was broken for us; and the pouring out of the wine is a figure and representation of the pouring of the blood of Christ, or the pouring forth of his soul unto death. And there are useful meditations that may arise from thence. But in this ordinance there is a real exhibition of Christ unto every believing soul.

I shall a little inquire into it, to lead your faith into a due exercise in it, under the administration of this ordinance.

First, The exhibition and tender of Christ, in this ordinance, is distinct from the tender of Christ in the promise of the gospel; as in many other things, so it is in this. In the promise of the gospel the person of the Father is principally looked upon, as proposing and tendering Christ unto us. In this ordinance, Christ tendered himself, 'This is my body;' saith he, 'do this in remembrance of me.' He makes an immediate tender of himself unto a believing soul; and calls our faith unto a respect to his grace, to his love, to his readiness to unite, and spiritually to incorporate with us. Again,

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Secondly, It is a tender of Christ, and an exhibition of Christ under an especial consideration; not in general, but under this consideration, as he is, as it were, 'newly' (so the word is) 'sacrificed;' as he is a new and fresh sacrifice in the great work of reconciling, making peace with God, making an end of sin, doing all that was to be done between God and sinners, that they might be at peace.

Christ makes a double representation of himself, as the great Mediator upon his death, and the oblation and sacrifice which he accomplished thereby.

He represents himself unto God in heaven, there to do whatever remains to be done with God on our behalf, by his intercession. The intercession of Christ is nothing but the presentation of himself unto God, upon his oblation and sacrifice.

He presents himself unto God to do with him what remains to be done on our part, to procure mercy and grace for us.

He presents himself unto us in this ordinance, to do with us what remains to be done on the part of God; and this answers to his intercession above, which is the counterpart of his present mediation, to do with us what remains on the part of God, to give out peace and mercy in the seal of the covenant unto our souls.

There is this special exhibition of Jesus Christ, and it is given directly for this special exercise of faith, that we may know how to receive him in this ordinance.

1. We receive him as one that hath actually accomplished the great work (so he tenders himself) of making peace with God for us; for the blotting out of sins, and for the bringing in everlasting righteousness. He doth not tender himself as one that can do these things. It is a relief when we have an apprehension that Christ can do all this for us: nor doth he tender himself as one that will do these things upon any such or such conditions, as shall be prescribed unto us. But he tenders himself unto our faith, as one that hath done these things; and as such are we to receive him, if we intend to glorify him in this ordinance; as one that hath actually done this, actually made peace for us, actually blotted out our sins, and purchased eternal redemption for us.

Brethren, can we receive Christ thus? Are we willing to

receive him thus? If so, we may go away and be no more sorrowful. If we come short herein, we come short of that faith which is required of us in this ordinance. Pray let us endeavour to consider, how Jesus Christ doth hereby make a tender of himself unto us, as one that hath actually taken away all our sins, and all our iniquities, that none of them shall ever be laid unto our charge: and to receive him as such, is to give glory unto him.

2. He tenders himself as one that hath done this work by his death; for it is the remembrance of his death in a peculiar manner that we celebrate. What there is of love, what there is of efficacy, of power and comfort in that, what there is of security, I may have occasion another time to speak unto you. At present this is all I would offer; that for the doing of these great things, for the doing the greatest, the hardest things that our faith is exercised about, which are the pardon of our sins, and the acceptance of our persons with God, for the accomplishment hereof, he died an accursed death; and that death had no power over him, but the bands of it were loosed; he rose from under it, and was acquitted. Let us act faith on Jesus Christ, as one that brings with him mercy and pardon, as that which was procured by his death, against which lies no exception. I could shew you that nothing was too hard for it, that nothing was left to be done by it, which we are to receive.

3. To be made partakers of him in this sacramental tender, by submitting unto his authority in his institutions, by assenting unto the truth of his word in the promise, that he will be present with us, and give himself unto us, and by approving of that glorious way of making peace for us, which he hath trodden and gone in, in his sufferings, and in our stead: to get a view of Christ, as tendering himself unto every one of our souls in this ordinance of his own institution, as he who hath perfectly made an end of all differences between God and us, and who brings along with him all the mercy and grace that is in the heart of God, and in his covenant: to have such a view of him, and so to receive him by faith, that it shall be life unto our souls, is the way to give glory unto God, and to have peace and rest in our own bosoms.

4. And lastly, in one word, faith is so to receive him, as

to enable us to sit down at God's table, as those that are the Lord's friends; as those that are invited to feast upon the sacrifice. The sacrifice is offered, Christ is the sacrifice, God's passover; God makes a feast upon it, and invites his friends to sit down at his table, there being now no difference between him and us. Let us pray that he would help us to exercise faith to this purpose.

DISCOURSE VIII.*

YOU know I usually speak a few words to prepare us for this ordinance: you know it is an ordinance of calling to remembrance, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' There was under the Old Testament but one sacrifice to call any thing to remembrance; and God puts a mark upon that sacrifice, as that which was not, as it were, well-pleasing unto him, but only what necessity did require, and that was 'the sacrifice of jealousy,' Numb. v. 15. Saith God, 'There shall be no oil in it' (a token of peace); 'there shall be no frankincense' (that should yield a sweet savour), 'for it is a sacrifice to bring iniquity to remembrance.' This great ordinance of the Lord's supper, is not to call iniquity to remembrance, but it is to call to remembrance the putting an end to iniquity; God will make an end of sin, and this ordinance is our solemn remembrance of it.

Now there are sundry things that we are to call to remembrance. I have done my endeavour to help you to call the love of Christ to remembrance. The Lord I trust hath guided my thoughts now to direct you to call the sufferings of Christ unto remembrance. I know it may be a suitable meditation to take up your minds and mine, in and under this ordinance. It is our duty in this holy ordinance solemnly to call to remembrance the sufferings of Christ.

It is said of the preaching of the gospel, that 'Jesus Christ is therein evidently crucified before our eyes,' Gal. iii. 1. And if Christ be evidently crucified before our eyes in the preaching of the gospel, Christ is much more evidently

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