

Then the other act of God is the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to us. It is not enough to us, that our sins are all carried away into a land not inhabited; we stand in need of a righteousness whereby we may be accepted before God. He makes us to be the righteousness of God; we do not make ourselves so, but are made so by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.

Our second act of faith that God may stir us up unto in this ordinance, is to 'receive the atonement.' So the apostle expresses it, Rom. v. 11. we receive together with it all the fruits of the atonement.

Now if the Lord will be pleased to stir up our hearts from under their deadness, to gather them in from their wanderings, to make us sensible of our concern, to give us the acting of faith in this matter, that truly and really the holy God has laid all our iniquities upon Christ, and tenders to us life, righteousness, justification, and mercy by him, we shall then have the fruit of this administration.

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### DISCOURSE XVIII.\*

I SHALL offer a few words with a view to prepare our minds to the exercise of faith and communion with God in this ordinance: and because we ought to be in the highest exercise of faith in this ordinance, I shall take occasion from those words which express as high an acting of faith, I think, as any is in the Scripture; I mean those words of the apostle in

GAL. ii. 20.—*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Our inquiry now is, How we may act faith? It acts two ways:

1. By way of adherence, cleaving to, trusting and acquiescing in God in Christ, as declaring his love, grace, and good-will in his promises. This is the faith whereby we live, whereby we are justified; the faith without which this

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ordinance will not profit, but disadvantage us; for without this faith we cannot discern the Lord's body, we cannot discern him as crucified for us: this is that we are in an especial manner to examine ourselves about in reference to a participation of this ordinance; for self-examination is a gospel institution proper for this ordinance. And this is the faith whereby we are in Christ, without which a participation of the outward signs and pledges of Christ will not avail us. So then, with faith thus acting, we are to be qualified and prepared unto a participation of this ordinance.

2. Another way by which faith ought to act in this ordinance, is that of special application. 'Who loved me and gave himself for me;' this is faith acting by particular application. I hope the Lord has given us that faith whereby we may be prepared for this ordinance. And now I am to inquire and direct you a little in that faith which you may act in this ordinance; I say, it is this faith of special application to our own souls that God now requires we should act; and I prove it thus, It is because in this ordinance there is a proposition, tender, and communication of Christ to every one in particular. In the promise of the gospel Christ is proposed indefinitely to all that believe; and so the faith I mentioned before, of acquiescence in him, answers what is required of us by virtue of the promise in the gospel; but in this ordinance by God's institution Christ is tendered and given to me and to thee, to every one in particular; for it is by his institution that the elements in this ordinance are distributed to every particular person, to shew that there is a tender and communication of Christ to particular persons. Now such a particular communication is to be received by this particular faith, the faith of application, to receive him to our own souls.

And then, moreover, one great end of the ordinance is manifestly, that it requires the acting of faith in a particular way of application to every one of us; it is for a farther incorporation of Christ in our souls; it is for receiving Christ as nourishment, as the bread that came down from heaven, as giving his body and blood for spiritual food. Now every one knows, that whatever feasts be prepared in the world, unless every one in particular takes his own portion, and eats and digests it, it will not turn to nourishment unto him.

This particular act of application answers that eating, drinking, and digesting, which the nature of the ordinance does require. So, brethren, this is that I aim at, that it is our duty in this ordinance to act a particular faith as to the application of Christ and all his benefits, each one to his own soul.

You will say then, What is the special object of this special faith? Truly that which the apostle tells us here, it is special love, in the first place; and it is the special design of the death of Christ, in the next place. 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.' The object you ought to fix upon, in the exercise of this faith of application to your own souls, is the special love of Christ, that Christ had a special love, not only to the church in general; but the truth is, Christ had a special love for me in particular. It will be a very hard thing for you or me to rise up to an act of faith, that Christ hath a love for us in particular, unless we can answer this question, Why should Christ love you or me in particular? What answer can I give hereto, when I know he does not love all the world? I can give but this answer to it, Even because he would. I know nothing in me, or in any of you, that can deserve his love. Was there ever such a thing heard of, that Christ should have a particular love for such as we are? Would ever any person go and fix his love on a creature who was all over leprous? Is this the manner of man? Truly Christ would never have fixed his love upon any of our poor, defiled, leprous souls, but upon this one consideration, I know I can cleanse them, and I will. He loved us.

But what will he do with such deformed, polluted creatures as we are? Why, 'He loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might wash and purify it, and present it to him a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.' Though we are altogether deformed and defiled, though no example, no instance can be given in things below, or among the creatures, of any fixing love on such as we are; yet Christ has done it out of sovereign grace, with this resolution, that he would cleanse us with his own blood to make us fit for himself.

O that God would help you and me to some firm unshaken acts of faith, that Jesus Christ did out of sovereign

grace love us in particular, and that in pursuit of this love he has washed us in his blood, to make us lovely and meet for himself! This is love to be adored and celebrated in time and to eternity.

This special love of Christ is not only to be considered by us in this special acting of faith, as free and undeserved, but it is to be considered as invincible, that would break through all oppositions, or whatever stood in the way, that nothing should hinder or turn him aside in his design of doing good to our souls. It is a glorious pitch that the spouse rises to in Cant. viii. 7. 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned;' speaking of her own love to Christ; nothing could quench, nothing could drown it, nothing could make a purchase of it from her, but her love was invincible, and would carry her through all difficulties. O how much more was the love of Christ! for our love being once fixed on Christ, meets with no difficulties of that nature that the love of Christ met withal when it was fixed on us. What did the love of Christ meet with when it was fixed on us? that we must take along with us, viz. 'the curse of the law,' was the first thing that presented itself to him: 'The soul that sins shall die. Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.' That he was to make 'his soul an offering for sin,' was presented to him. We are to look on this love of Christ as sovereign and free, and with a design of making our souls lovely; so invincible also, that it broke up the eternal obstacles, that nothing could stand before it until it had accomplished his whole work and design. 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

I speak on this manner, and of these things, to encourage and direct the weakest and most unskilful in the mysteries of the gospel, to instruct them in the exercise of faith in this ordinance; and therefore, I say, that as this special faith (which I proved to you to be our duty in this ordinance) is to respect the love of Christ, so it is to respect more especially the peculiar acting of the love of Christ, whereby he gave himself for us. Gave himself! how is that? truly thus, brethren; the Lord help me to believe it, that I stood before

the judgment-seat of God, charged with my original apostacy from him, and with all the sins of my life multiplied above the hairs of my head, and being ready to perish, to have the sentence pronounced against me; then Christ came and stood in my place, putting the sinner aside, and undertaking to answer this matter; 'Let the poor sinner stand aside awhile; come, enter into rest, abide here in the cleft of the rock, I will undertake thy cause, and plead it out at God's judgment-seat.' In this undertaking, God spared him not: as if God should say, If you will stand in the place of the sinner, and undertake his cause, then it must go with you as with him; 'I will not spare.' 'Lo, I come,' says Christ, notwithstanding this, 'to do thy will, O God;' whatever thou dost require to make good this cause I have espoused, lo, I come to do it.

So Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. Everlasting rest and peace will dwell upon our souls, if the Lord will be pleased to help us to exercise faith on Christ's love in this ordinance, wherein all these things are represented to us.

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## DISCOURSE XIX.\*

*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.—GAL. ii. 20.*

THE apostle in this place is expressing the vigour, and indeed the triumph, of the life of faith, 'Nevertheless I live.' To shew the excellency of that life, says he, 'yet not I, but Christ lives in me,' &c. That which I would to our purpose observe from these words is this, That the exercise of faith on the death of Christ ('who loved me, and gave himself for me') is the very life of faith. This is that we are now called to, to the exercise of faith on the death of Christ; and I cannot more recommend it to you than by this observation, to shew that the life of faith does greatly consist in this peculiar exercise of it upon the death of Christ. And that,

1. Because Christ in his death, as the ordinance of God for the salvation of believing sinners, is the proper and pe-

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cular object of faith, as it justifies and saves. Now when faith is in its exercise upon its direct, immediate, proper object, it is like a person that is feeding on his proper food, which gives refreshment, spirits, and strength; for faith and its object are in Scripture set out as an appetite and food; and especially it is so represented to us in this ordinance, where the spiritual food of our souls is conveyed to our faith under the symbol and representation of food to our bodies, which we eat and drink. Therefore, brethren, our faith is in its proper place, it is about its proper work, it is directing the soul to its special food, when it is exercised about the death of Christ, as the ordinance of God for the salvation of sinners.

2. As the death of Christ is thus the immediate and direct object of our faith, for 'God has set him forth as a propitiation for sin through faith in his blood,' which is the proper object of faith as it justifies, so the ultimate and supreme object of our faith is, the properties of God as manifested and glorified in the death of Christ; that you shall see how faith has its plain and full work in coming to this; 'who loved me, and gave himself for me.' The properties of God are God himself; the properties of God as manifested and glorified are God's name; and God himself and his name are the supreme and ultimate object of our faith and trust. All the inquiry then is, What special properties of the nature of God, God did design to manifest and glorify in the death of Christ, so as we should make them the special ultimate object of our faith, that which faith will find rest and satisfaction in, and wherein it will give glory to God? For the reason why God has made faith the alone instrument, and no other grace, of justification, and so of salvation, it is not because it is so fitted and suited to receive in us, as that it is the only grace whereby we give glory to God, and can do so.

Now let us see, that we may know how to exercise faith therein, what are those properties of the divine nature which God designs to manifest and glorify in the death of Christ, that our faith may stand in, and be fixed upon them. I find several things that God distinctly proposes of his divine excellency for our faith to fix upon in the death of Christ.

(1.) His righteousness. Rom. iii. 25. 'Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to

declare his righteousness.' I shall not now shew how, or wherein; but to me, this it is that manifests his righteousness in granting forgiveness of sin in the death of Christ, in that he caused all our iniquities to meet upon him. Remember, brethren, we are here to give God the glory he designed to himself, in sending Christ to die for us; and he tells us plainly what it was, and therefore it is expected of us, that we should give glory to him. Let us labour to be in the actual exercise of faith, whereby we may declare the righteousness of God in this thing.

(2.) God designed to glorify his love.

This is more particularly insisted on than any property of God in this matter. 'God so loved the world as to send his only begotten Son.' 'God commended his love unto us, that when we were sinners Christ died for us.' 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' There is no property of the nature of God which he doth so eminently design to glorify in the death of Christ as his love. That we may know that God is love; that the Father himself loves us, he has sent Jesus Christ out of his eternal love to save sinners; and if we have not due apprehensions of these things, it is not our appearing in this place that will give glory to God.

(3.) God does design to glorify his grace or pardoning mercy. Eph. i. 6. 'He has made us accepted in the beloved, to the praise of the glory of his grace.' This God purposed, to make his grace in pardoning sinners very glorious by giving Christ to die for us.

(4.) God designed to glorify his wisdom. Eph. i. 8. 'He has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.' Eph. iii. 10. There appeared 'the manifold wisdom of God.' 1 Cor. i. 24. 'Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.'

Now let us gather up these things. The special ultimate act of faith whereby we are justified, are those divine properties of God's nature which he designed to manifest in the death of Christ, his righteousness, his love, his grace, his wisdom.

The reason, therefore, why the life of faith does consist in its exercise on the death of Christ is, because the death of Christ is the immediate proper object of faith, as the ordi-

nance of God for the salvation of sinners ; and because the glorious properties of the nature of God, which are manifested in the death of Christ, are the ultimate object of our faith, wherein we give glory to him, and find rest to our own souls.

Let us then be called on and be stirred up to this exercise of faith upon this present occasion. And to that end,

1. We might consider the deplorable condition of all our souls without this blessed provision and ordinance of God for our deliverance by the death of Christ. We had been in a deplorable condition, the wrath of God abiding on us, had not God made this a blessed way for our deliverance.

2. If you would be found acting faith in this matter, labour to come up to a firm, vigorous assent of your minds, not only that these things are true, but that this is the way wherein God will be glorified to eternity. The truth of it is, that person who is firmly satisfied and heartily pleased, that this way of the death of Christ for the salvation of sinners by the forgiveness of sin, is the way whereby God is and will be glorified, I say, that person is a true believer. Now let not your assent be only to this thing, That it is true, that Christ came into the world to save sinners ; but to this, That this is the way whereby God is and will be glorified. He will be glorified in pardoning such guilty creatures as we are, in imputing righteousness to such sinners as we are. He is glorified in laying all our iniquities on Christ. By this way, his righteousness, his love, grace, and wisdom are all manifested ; this is God's being glorified. If our souls come up to a free close with these things, that all these properties are manifested in this way, that is an act of faith, and may the Lord help us unto it.

3. Let us gather up our minds to this institution, whereby these things are represented to us. Here is represented the death of Christ, the immediate object of our faith, as God's ordinance. If the Lord help us to see it so represented to us, as that divine righteousness and wisdom, love and grace do all centre therein, and appear eminently to our souls, we shall have communion with God in this ordinance.