

DISCOURSE XV.*

I SHALL offer a few words to direct you in the present exercise of faith in this ordinance. I design no more but to give occasion to that particular exercise of faith which is now required of us, whereby we may sanctify the name of God in a due manner, give glory to him by believing, and receive establishment unto our own souls: and I would do it by minding you of that word of our Lord Jesus Christ in

JOHN xii. 32.—*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

What he means by his lifting up, the evangelist expounds in the next words, which are these, ‘This he spake, signifying what death he should die.’ So that the lifting up of Christ on the cross, is that which he lays as the foundation of his drawing sinners unto him. No sinner will come near to Christ unless he be drawn; and to be drawn is to be made willing to come unto him, and to follow him in chains of love. Christ draws none to him, whether they will or no, but he casts on their minds, hearts, and wills, the cords of his grace and love, working in them powerfully, working on them kindly, to cause them to choose him, to come to him, and to follow him. ‘Draw me, we will run after thee.’ The great principle and fountain from whence the drawing efficacy and power of grace doth proceed is, from the lifting up of Christ. Drawing grace is manifested in, and drawing love proceeds from the sufferings of Jesus Christ on the cross.

But that which I would just mind you of at present is this, that the look of faith unto Christ as lifted up, is the only means of bringing our souls near to him. Our faith is often expressed by looking unto Christ; Isa. xlv. 22. ‘Look unto me,’ says he, ‘and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.’ The conclusion is, that those who so look unto him shall be justified and saved. Isa. lxxv. 1. ‘Behold me, be-

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hold me.' And it is the great promise of the efficacy of the Spirit poured out upon us, that 'we shall look unto him whom we have pierced;' Zech. x. 12. God calls us to look off from all other things, look off from the law, look off from self, look off from sin, look only unto Christ. Is Christ said to be lifted up in his death; and to die that manner of death wherein he was lifted up on the cross? so it was expressed in the type; the brazen Serpent was lifted up on a pole, that those who were smote with the fiery serpents might look to it. If the soul can but turn an eye of faith unto Jesus Christ as thus lifted up, it will receive healing; though the sight of one be not so clear as the sight of another. All had not a like sharpness of sight that looked to the brazen serpent; nor have all the like vigour of faith to look to Christ; but one sincere look to Christ is pleasing to him, so as he says, Cant. iv. 9. 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes.' A soul sensible of guilt and sin, that casts but one look of faith to Christ as lifted up, it even raises the heart of Christ himself, and such a soul shall not go away unrefreshed, unrelieved.

Now, brethren, the end of this ordinance is to lift up Christ in representation: as he was lifted up really on the cross, and as in the whole preaching of the gospel, Christ is evidently crucified before our eyes, so more especially in the administration of this ordinance. Do we see then wherein the special acting of faith in this ordinance does consist? God forbid we should neglect the stirring up our hearts unto the particular acting of faith in Jesus Christ, who herein is lifted up before us. That which we are to endeavour in this ordinance is to get a view by faith, faith working by thoughts, by meditation, acting by love, a view of Christ as lifted up, that is, as bearing our iniquities in his own body on the tree. What did Christ do on the tree? what was he lifted up for, if it was not to bear our sins? Out of his love and zeal to the glory of God, and out of compassion to the souls of men, Christ bore the guilt and punishment of sin, and made expiation for it. O that God in this ordinance would give our souls a view of him! I shall give it to myself, and to you in charge at this time: if we have a view of Christ by faith as

lifted up, our hearts will be drawn nearer to him. If we find not our hearts in any manner drawn nearer to him, it is much to be feared we have not had a view of him as bearing our iniquities. Take therefore this one remembrance as to the acting of faith in the administration of this ordinance, labour to have it fixed upon Christ as bearing sin, making atonement for it, with his heart full of love to accomplish a cause in righteousness and truth.

DISCOURSE XVI.*

To whet our minds, and lead us to a particular exercise of faith and love in this duty, I shall add a few words from that Scripture which I have already spoken something to, upon this occasion, viz.

JOHN xii. 32.—*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

This lifting up, as I said before, was the lifting up of Christ on the cross, when as the apostle Peter tells us, ‘he bore,’ or as the word is, he carried up ‘our sins in his own body on the tree.’ Christ died for three ends: 1. To answer an institution; 2. To fulfil a type; and, 3. To be a moral representation of the work of God in his death.

1. It was to answer the institution, that he who was hanged on a tree was accursed of God; Deut. xxi. 23. There were many other ways appointed of God to put malefactors to death among the Jews; some were stoned; in some cases they were burned with fire; but it is only by God appointed that he that was hanged on a tree was accursed of God: and Christ died that death, to shew, that it was he who underwent the curse of God, as the apostle shews, Gal. iii. 13. ‘He was made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.’

2. Christ died that death to fulfil a type. For it was a bloody and most painful death, yet it was a death wherein a

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bone of him was not broken, typified of him in the paschal lamb, of which a bone was not to be broken. Christ was lifted up on the cross to fulfil that type, that though his death was bitter, lingering, painful, shameful, yet not a bone was broke; that every one might have a whole Christ, an entire Saviour, notwithstanding all his suffering and rending on our behalf.

3. He was so lifted up that it might be a moral representation unto all, to answer that other type also of the serpent lifted up in the wilderness; so that he was the person that might say, 'Behold me, behold me.' He was lifted up between heaven and earth, that all creatures might see God had set him forth to be a propitiation.

'And I, when I am lifted up,' what will he then do? When I have answered the curse, when I have fulfilled the types, when I have complied with the will of God in being a propitiation, 'I will draw all men to me.' It is placed upon Christ's lifting up; now that is actually past; nor was it done merely while Christ was hanging on the cross. There are two ways whereby there is a representation made of Christ being lifted up, to draw men unto him.

1. By the preaching of the word. So the apostle tells us, Gal. iii. 1. 'That Jesus Christ was evidently crucified before their eyes.' The great end of preaching the word is to represent evidently Christ crucified; it is to lift up Christ that he may draw sinners unto him. And, 2. It is represented in this ordinance of the Lord's Supper, wherein we shew forth his death. Christ is peculiarly and eminently lifted up in this ordinance, because it is a peculiar and eminent representation of his death.

Now there are two ways of Christ's drawing persons to himself,

1. His way of drawing sinners to him by faith and repentance.

2. His way of drawing believers to him, as to actual communion with him.

Christ draws sinners to him by faith and repentance, as he is lifted up in the preaching of the word; and he draws believers to him as unto actual communion, as by the word, so in an especial manner by this ordinance. I shall only speak a word on the latter, how Christ is lifted up in this

ordinance that represents his death unto us, or, how he draws us unto actual communion with him. 1. He does it by his love. The principal thing that is always to be considered in the lifting up of Christ is, his love. 'Who loved me,' says the apostle, 'and gave himself for me: and who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' I could shew you, that love is attractive, that it is encouraging and constraining. I will only leave this with you, whatever apprehensions God in this ordinance shall give you of the love of Christ, you have therein an experience of Christ's drawing you, as he is lifted up, unto actual communion with him. It is of great concernment to you. Christ is never so lovely unto the soul of a sinner as when he is considered as lifted up, that is, as undergoing the curse of God, that a blessing might come upon us. O that he who has loved us, and because he has loved us, would draw us with the cords of his loving-kindness, as God says he does; Jer. xxxi. 3. 'Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.'

2. The sufferings of Christ in soul and body are attractive of, and do draw the souls of believers to him. 'They shall look on me whom they have pierced and mourn.' It is a look to Christ as pierced for sin under his sufferings that is attractive to the souls of believers in this ordinance, because these sufferings were for us. Call to mind, brethren, some of these texts of Scripture; see what God will give you out of them. 'He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He was made a curse for us; and he bore our sins in his own body on the tree; and died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.' If Jesus Christ be pleased to let in a sense of his sufferings for us by these Scriptures upon our souls, then we have another experience of his drawing us, as he is lifted up.

3. Christ draws us as he is lifted up, by the effects of it. What was he lifted up for? it was to make peace with God through his blood. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.' When? when 'he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.' It is the sacrifice of atonement; it is the sacrifice wherewith the covenant between God and us was sealed. This is one notion of the supper of our Lord.

Covenants were confirmed with sacrifice. Isaac made a covenant with Abimelech, and confirmed it with sacrifice. So it was with Jacob and Laban; and in both places, when they had confirmed the covenant with a sacrifice, they had a feast upon the sacrifice. Christ by his sacrifice has ratified the covenant between God and us, and invites us in this ordinance to a participation of it. He draws us by it to faith in him as he has made an atonement by his sacrifice.

These are some of the ways whereby Christ draws the souls of believers unto communion with him in this ordinance, that represents him as lifted up, by expressing his love, by representing his sufferings, and tendering the sealing of the covenant as confirmed with a sacrifice, inviting us to feed on the remainder of the sacrifice that is left to us for the nourishment of our souls. O that he would cast some of these cords of love upon our souls! for if he should be lifted up, and we should not come, if we should find no cords of love cast upon us to draw us unto actual communion, we should have no advantage by this ordinance.

How shall we come in actual communion unto Christ in this ordinance upon his drawing? what is required of us? why, (1.) 'We are to come by faith to receive the atonement;' Rom. v. 11. We come to a due communion with Christ in this ordinance, if we come to receive the atonement made by his death, as full of divine wisdom, grace, and love, and as the truth and faithfulness of God is confirmed in it, to receive and lay hold on this atonement, that we may have peace with God. Isa. xxvii. 5. 'Let him take hold of my strength, and he shall be at peace with me.' Brethren, here is the arm of God, Christ the power of God, Christ lifted up. We ourselves have sinned and provoked God. What shall we do? shall we set briars and thorns in battle array against God? No, says he, I will pass through and devour such persons. What then? 'Let him take hold of my strength,' of my arm, 'and be at peace.' God speaks this to every soul of us in this lifting up of Christ. Now receive the atonement as full of infinite wisdom, holiness, and truth.

(2.) Faith comes and brings the soul to Christ as he is thus lifted up, but it is always accompanied with love, whereby the soul adheres to Christ when it is come.

Doth faith bring us to Christ on his drawing, to receive the atonement? set love at work to cleave unto him, to take him into our hearts and souls, and to abide with him.

(3.) It is to come with mourning and godly sorrow, because of our own sins. 'Look unto him whom we have pierced and mourn.' These things are very consistent. Do not think we speak things at random: they are consistent in experience, that we should receive Christ as making an atonement, and have peace with God in the pardon of our sins, and nevertheless to mourn for our own iniquities. The Lord give experience of them in your hearts.

Let us now pray that some of these cords wherewith he draws the souls of believers, may be on our souls in this ordinance.

DISCOURSE XVII.

WHEN we have opportunity of speaking to you on these occasions, it is for the direction of the exercise of your faith in this ordinance in a due manner. Here is a representation of the death of Christ; and there is in the word a representation of that which we should principally consider, and act faith with respect unto in the representation that is made in this ordinance, and that is of a blessed change and commutation that is made between Christ and believers, 'in the imputation of their sins unto him, and in the imputation of his righteousness unto them:' and the principal part of the life and exercise of faith, consists in a due consideration and improvement thereof. God taught this to the church of the Old Testament in the type of the offering of the scape-goat.

And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgression in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, &c.—
LEVIT. xvi. 21.

Aaron was not only to confess all the sins and iniquities of the people over the head of the goat, but he was to put all their sins upon him. Here is a double act, the confession of sin, which is, as it were, the gathering of all their sins