

## STRANGERS CALLED TO BEHOLD CHRIST

Isaiah lxxv, 1 - I said, Behold Me, Behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My name.

Would ye know what is the exercise of the saints above? They are even giving obedience unto this text, 'Behold me, Behold me.' There is not an eye in heaven that is not taken up in the beholding and contemplation of Him that sits upon the throne, and of the Lamb for ever and ever. This text, which we have read, is one of the greatest mysteries that can be. Is not this a mystery, that we should be invited to behold One who is invisible? Who can resolve that mystery? But, O to behold Him, and touch Him, who calls us to behold, and draw near unto Him! I think, if once we had attained to a satisfying look of Christ, we would be content to depart and begone. Believers, and expectants of the crown, are ye not longing to be away, that ye may have these precious, immediate, and uninterrupted sights of Christ; and that, if it were possible, ye would take the sand-glass of your time, and shake it, and cry out, 'O time flee away? Is there such a desire as this among you, that you are crying out, 'O when shall my night be gone, and all my shadows flee away, when I shall enter in through these blessed gates, and walk upon these streets that are paved with gold! Old men, are ye longing to have the immediate sight of Christ? Ye that are nearest eternity, are ye longing to be carried home?

Old women, are ye longing for the immediate sight of God? Young men and maids, are ye longing for the day when ye shall be above all these veils that are between us and Christ, when ye shall take Him in your arms and cry out, 'He is mine, He is mine?'

O the draughts of love that are among the saints who are above! May we not say, 'O time, haste and flee away! I am sure, if ye knew Him, ye would not but count the hours and days of your time, and desire Him to rend these clouds and cry out, 'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away'. Would ye know what is the reason that it is said of these that are round about the throne, they are full of eyes within and without, or behind and before; but they are not said to be full of tongues? I tell you the reason of it. I think the saints round about the throne are more taken up in looking than in speaking; they are more taken up in admiration than expressing their thoughts of God. I would have every one of you asking yourselves, 'O am longing to be gone and have the sight of Christ that shall never have an end? Believe it, there is no wearying in heaven.

But, to come to the words, and, O, to look to them. Believe it, Christ's heart is with them, and they are perfumed with love. Ye have in them these two things.

1. Ye have the excellent desire that Christ presents to sinners, and it is this, 'Behold me, Behold me.' I desire no more of you but to give me one look. And think ye not

this is a poor desire? Ay, it is both the poorest and richest desire Christ hath to present to you. O Glasgow! wouldst thou satisfy Christ? Then, I say, behold Him. Old men in Glasgow, would ye satisfy Christ? Then, I say, behold Him. Young men and maids, would ye satisfy Christ? Then, I say, give the Son of God one look before he go away. O! do ye resolve to give Christ a look before he go! Will ye ask at your own heart? Believe it, if once we saw Him, we would never part with Him. I cannot tell you what He is, neither think I angels could tell you what He is. O come and see, and that will best resolve the mystery.

2. Ye have, in the words, these considerations by which He presseth home this desire and command upon you who are here. The first consideration from the words is in that ME; 'Behold me, which consideration is taken from the excellency of the object that we are invited to behold; as if Christ should say, 'Behold transcendant ME; Behold spotless ME; behold beautiful ME; Behold dying ME; Behold compassionate ME; Behold glorified ME. Ay, I think all the rhetoric and oratory of heaven is comprehended in that word ME; 'Behold ME, and will ye not take a sight of this precious and excellent object?'

The second consideration in the words, to press this home, is, that Christ is exceeding serious with you this day. O Glasgow! His seriousness is pointed out in doubling and repeating this command, 'Behold me, behold

me, as if I should say, 'Behold me'; and, if that will not serve you, I will even say it over again, Behold me; I have so good will to the thing, that I would fain have you considering to obey. Believe it, Christ is serious with you; and cursed be the person who will not be serious with Christ.

The third consideration in the words to press home this command, is this, that Christ hath interposed much of His authority for bringing you to the obedience of this command; therefore He sets this preface before it, 'I said, Behold me, behold me'; as if He would have said, 'Omnipotent I said 'Behold me'. I, who cannot be resisted, said 'Behold me'; I, who will tread in the wine-press of my fury all undervaluers of this command, said 'Behold me,' 'Behold me'. And O blessed are we in this, that ever this blessed sentence proceeded out of the mouth of Christ, 'Behold me, behold me'. Now, will ye not stir up yourselves to obey? Think ye not this is a most excellent word? What word of Christ will relish to your heart if this word will not, 'Behold me, behold me'?

A fourth consideration from the words is taken from the freedom of this offer; for the offer is given to persons who were not called by His name.

The fifth consideration from the words is, that there is strength covenanted for those who resolve and endeavour obedience to this command of beholding Christ. Are there any persons within these doors who resolve, before

they go home, that they shall get a sight of Christ? I say, there is power covenanted for thee, and thou shalt get a sight of Him. Know ye not that word, 'Where the word of a king is, there is power'. And I say the word of the King is here; therefore there is power. I have this word to say unto you, and, if it were my last word, I may say it unto you; Christ is serious with you and ye know not how long he will be so; therefore, I adjure you, by all the blessings of the everlasting covenant, be serious with Him. And know this, if we could preach the heart of Christ, as it is, I think we could persuade stones to love Him; but know it, we cannot commend Him half enough. O precious Christ, commend Thyself, for we cannot commend Thee. I think, if we do not commend Christ, if He were to come here Himself, He would not commend Himself. Know it, there is not an undervaluing of the offers of Christ from us, but it is as much as if He were here Himself intreating you to behold Him, and ye should say unto Him personally, 'We will have none of thee'.

Now, may we say to Him, 'Persuade this people that thou art serious.' Christ is precious company, O will ye take a sight of Him.

3. The last thing in the words is, the persons to whom the command is given, and it was to 'a nation that was not called by his name'; that is, to a people who neither knew Christ by name nor surname. These are the persons who are invited to take Christ. I say to thee, be whom thou

wilt, the greatest adulterer within this house, I obtest thee and charge thee, in His name, to behold Him.

Now, before we speak to any of these things fully, we shall speak a little to these two questions.

First, what is here meant by the beholding of Christ, which is the great voice that is cried to you this day? We conceive, that by beholding Christ, nothing else is to be understood but faith; and there are these three grounds why faith is called a beholding of Christ.

1. The first ground is, because faith is a thing that may be exercised on Christ at a distance; therefore faith is called a beholding. Ye know, a person may look at a thing far off before he come to take hold of it; so a Christian, when he cannot get a grip of Christ, may get a look of Him. And I would say this, O Christians, when Christ departs, cast a greedy eye after Him, and that is the best way to bring Him home.

2. There is this ground why faith is called a beholding, because the discoveries of faith and of Christ are as certain and sure as the discoveries of sense. There is nothing that faith says of Christ, but it is as certain and sure as if ye had seen it.

3. The third ground why faith is called a beholding and looking unto Christ is, because faith is the grace that hath

sense waiting upon it; sense is the excellent and inseparable companion of faith; and, for that cause, faith is called a beholding of Christ. Secondly, the second question in the words is, what can be the reason that Christ doubles this command, Behold me, behold me? What needs the doubling of that command? Might not one word have served? No, I say, we are so desperately wicked that a thousand words will not serve the turn; though Christ should cry unto you till the breaking of the next day, there are hundreds here that would not give Christ a look!

1. The first ground why He doubles the command is, to point out, that a Christian should not be satisfied with one look of Christ; therefore He cries, Behold me; and, when ye have done that, ye must even then take another look; He is content ye should give Him a look, and another look. And,

2. There is this second ground why He doubles the command, and it is this, to point out the cursed frame that is among many. We are content too soon with the looks we get of Christ; some of us are content with half a look of Christ. No (says Christ), be not content till thou gettest two full and broad looks of me.

3. The third ground of it is, to point out the unwillingness of the greatest part of the hearers of the gospel to give to Christone 'behold"! Doth not this speak that Christ is, as it were, constrained to cry out unto you twice, 'Behold

me, behold me"! Ay, there are some of you, we may as soon persuade the stones of the wall to look unto Christ, as persuade you. Ay, when we cry unto you to give Christ a 'behold!' the devil stands at your elbow and he cries, 'O give me a behold! And, O that ye would obey Christ as soon as ye do the devil's desire. Now, I intreat you, ask yourselves, 'O shall I go away and not get a behold of Christ? Shall I not get one look of Him?

4. The fourth ground of doubling the command, is to point out Christ's exceeding seriousness and earnestness in this thing, that we should behold Him. Know it, O Glasgow, Christ is not complimenting with you; therefore, He says, 'Behold me, behold me! Old men, do ye think Christ is complimenting [exchanging compliments] with you? I charge you, old men, to know it, and believe it, that Christ is not complimenting with you; and if ye will not believe and obey this precious saying, 'Behold me! ye shall once obey that saying, 'Depart from me, I know you not.

5. The fifth ground of Christ's doubling this command: in this place, is to point out the excellent advantages that lie in the duty of beholding Christ. 'O! (says Christ), take a look of Me; yea, again take a look of Me; for I cannot tell what advantage lies unto you in this. I have but one word to say unto you, by the way; I intreat you, what think ye you will do before the other half hour be done? Are ye resolved to obey this command? O sleepers,



waken and study to endeavour obedience to this command. I would say this to you, O Glasgow, know it, if thou disobeyest this command today, I defy all the ministers of Scotland to assure you that ye shall meet with another behold; therefore harden not your hearts, even in this day, as in the provocation; and since Christ entreats you to behold Him, I entreat you close not your own eyes.

Now, in speaking to this excellent exhortation, I propose this one thing, that it is the duty of all them that hear this excellent gospel, to whom the glad tidings of salvation are preached, to behold and look unto Christ. This is clear, in that Christ urges this home with a twofold command, 'Behold me, behold me'; and it is clear from Song iii, 11, 'Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon. And I shall turn over the command, and say unto you, Go forth, O daughters of Glasgow, and behold King Solomon. This is Christ's command to you today, that ye would go forth, and behold Him; and it is clear, Isa. xlii, 1, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold'; and John xx, 27, where this is pressed upon Thomas. Now that this may be pressed home upon your consciences, I shall propose these eight considerations.

The first consideration that I would propose to press you to give one 'Behold' is this, that it is His command that we should look unto Him; therefore, I say, behold Him; for where the commandment of the king is, there is

power, no doubt, to revenge them that disobey Him. I say that word unto thee, that is in Eccles. viii, 2, 'I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment and that in regard of the oath of God. Now this is the commandment of the great King, that ye should give Christ one 'behold', and who will refuse Him. O that we could make a covenant with our eyes that we might never look upon another object but Christ. I would give you that counsel which Abimelech gave unto Sarah in another sense, Let Christ be the covering of thy eyes among all with whom thou conversest. Now is not this a pressing consideration, that it is Christ's command. O will you take this excellent command, and kiss it, and send it home again.

There is a second consideration to press you to look unto Christ, and to behold Him, and it is this, ye shall get salvation for a look. Is there a person here that would have freedom from the wrath of God? If thou wouldst have it, then I say give Christ one 'Behold' Now is not salvation offered unto you at an easy rate? Give Christ but one 'Behold, and thou shalt get salvation, Isa. xlv, 22, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth'. The gospel, the eternal, the full, the complete, the ravishing, the transcendent salvation, is offered unto you for a look. O Christian, wouldst thou have all the purchase of the death of Christ, come and take but a look of Him and have it. I am sure that is aim easy market; ye shall get all the wares of the everlasting gospel for a look. I shall yet go a little lower, thou shalt get salvation for half a look; is there a

person here that cannot look unto Christ with both his eyes? I say, look unto Christ with one of thy eyes, and thou shalt get salvation. Know ye not that word, 'Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. I say unto every person, will ye give Christ but half a look and ye shall get all the riches of the everlasting covenant. And I charge and obtest you, as in His sight, that ye would not despise His offers.

The third consideration to press you to look unto Christ, and to give Him one 'Behold,' is this, if thou couldst pray forty years, and weep other forty years; if thou couldst make thine eyes dim with weeping, and thy knees weak with fasting, and hadst been at all the communions that ever were in Scotland; if thou couldst be at them all thy time; and if thou couldst be at all the fasts, and preachings, and meetings that are in Scotland, it were to no purpose, if thou givest not Christ a look. Thy forty years weeping, and thy forty years praying, shall be but the aggravation of thy punishment if thou givest not Christ a look. Therefore, this may provoke you to give Christ a look; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. Know ye not, that all the actions of these who are out of Christ are but abominations.

There is this fourth consideration that I would propose to press you to look unto Christ, and it is this, that there are many sad disadvantages that attend the persons who will

not look unto Christ, and behold the Son of God. O persons, know it, know it for certainty, there is not one curse written within the book of the covenant (and O! there are many broad and everlasting curses in it), there is not one curse in this book, from the first of Genesis to the end of the Revelation, but it shall come upon the head of the person who will not behold the Son of God. O what will you do when Christ shall begin to read the curses in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, and in the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, 'Cursed be he that despiseth me; and all the congregation shall say amen'. I charge you, what will ye do, when Christ shall be sitting upon the throne, and shall judge, and say, 'Cursed shall be the undervaluers of me'? And there shall not be a saint on His right hand, in that blessed congregation, but shall say 'Amen'. O will ye think of it?

There is this fifth consideration to persuade you to look unto Christ, and to behold Him. Would ye have a heaven upon earth? Then, I say, behold Christ, for what is heaven? Is it not the beholding of Christ? If ye would have a heaven upon earth, then give obedience unto this command 'Behold Christ'. O, know it for a certainty, there is not an atheist that is here but shall give Christ one look. Ye shall get one look of Christ, all ye that are here; yea, ye that are strangers to Christ, shall get one look of Christ, and that shall be then, when ye shall wish ye were blind, and did not see Him. It shall be in that day, when He shall sit upon the white throne, and thou shalt

lift up thine eyes and see Him whom thou hast pierced; and thou shalt then cry out, 'O that I had no eyes to see Him whom I have pierced so oft.' The greatest atheist that is here shall get one sight of Christ. But, O, pass not beyond death without taking a look of Him.

The sixth consideration to press you to look unto Christ is this, that of all the exercises of a Christian, none hath so great advantage waiting upon it as this, of looking to the Son of God; and I shall name but these eight advantages that wait on looking unto Christ.

The first advantage that waits upon the beholding of Christ is this: It is the most excellent way to increase the grace of love. O Christian that art under this complaint, 'O how shall I get my love increased! I say, give Christ a behold, and believe it, it would make thy love to burn as a fire if thou wouldst but take a broad sight of Christ, Isa. xvii, 7, 'At that day shall a man look to his maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel'. There is none of them that look unto Christ, but their heart shall follow their eye, and their eye shall affect their heart. O, if this were Glasgow's day of looking to its Maker! What know ye but this is your last day of looking to your Maker! O will ye be provoked, as ye would have the excellent grace of love increased, to give Christ one look? O shall Christ be here, and there shall be none of us that will take one look of Him? I pray you to think of

it. What if this day, O Glasgow! what if Christ shall report this in heaven? I came to two great congregations under one roof in Glasgow, and there was (perhaps) none that would behold Me. I charge you to give Him one 'behold.' Old men, will ye behold Him? Did ye never desire to see a wonderful sight? O come, and take a sight of the Son of God.

The second advantage that waits upon these that look unto Christ is this: It is the most excellent way to win to the mortification of our idols. Would ye know a compendious way to mortify your lusts, then give Christ one look. This is clear, in Isa. xvii, 7, compared with the eighth verse, 'At that day, shall a man look unto his Maker, and shall cast away his idols, and defile the covering of them'. If once ye had a sight of spotless Christ, ye would cry out, 'What have I to do any more with idols? Says Paul, 'I look not to the things that are seen"; what aileth thee, Paul, mayest thou not take a sight of the world? 'No' (says he), 'I look for better things that are not seen'. The looking unto an unseen Christ made him forget to look to the transient vanities of the world. Is there a person here that is complaining he cannot get victory over his idols? Give Christ one 'behold, and thou shalt have victory.

The third advantage that accompanies and waits upon beholding of Christ is this: It is the most compendious way to win to repentance. Impenitent Glasgow, wouldst thou

win to repentance? (and I think we are indeed a generation of impenitent people), and would ye then win to repentance? Then give Christ one 'Behold'. This is clear, Job xlii, 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. The first sight that I got of God, made me to repent, and to sit down in the dust, and abhor myself. And Zech. xii, 10, 'And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn. Believe it, I think if we were looking to Christ at this time, there would not be a person within these doors, but would be weeping for Him whom they have pierced. I charge you, if ye would have repentance, then look to Christ. One look of Christ would make our frozen hearts to melt; one look of Him would make all our bonds to break; one look of Him would make all the bars of our doors that hinder us to repent, break. Would ye have repentance? Then give Christ a look, 'behold Him.'

The fourth advantage that waits upon one that gives Christ a look is this: Thou shalt have a victory over the grand idol of pride. Are there any persons here that are complaining of this, that they cannot have too low thoughts of themselves? I say to such, give Christ a look, Isa. vi, 5, 'I have seen the Lord of hosts'; and what of that? 'I am a man of unclean lips'. And Job xlii, 5, 6, 'Mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes. If we may allude to that word, 'Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not', Job vii, 8. O, but a sight of Him who

is invisible, would cause us to make our dwelling-place in the dust, and never to have high thoughts of ourselves anymore! -

The fifth advantage that attends beholding of Christ is this: Thou wouldst recover from thy apostasy and defection from God. Are there not many Christians that have this complaint in their mouths, O to he as in the days of old, and as in the months past? I say to you, give Christ but one 'Behold'. This is clear, Luke xxii, 61, 62. Believe it, a look of Christ is even as a cord about our necks, to draw us home to Him. A look of Christ makes a person to cry out,' 'I never had a good day out of Christ's company, therefore I will return again to Him. A look of Christ will make a Christian forsake his lovers, after whom he hath gone, and return again to Him. Would ye then recover from your apostasy? Then give Christ a look..

The sixth advantage that attends the beholding of Christ is this: It is the most excellent way to win above thy discouragements. Is there a person here that is under the feet of discouragement? If ye would win above it, then give Christ a 'Behold.O! a sight of Christ would make us a city of joy; 'they rejoiced when they saw Jesus''; ay, a sight of Him would make us 'a city of praise',and 'the voice of thanksgiving should be heard in it.Is there any person here that would have the garment of praise, instead of the garment of heaviness? Then give unto Christ



a look and obey this text.

There is this seventh advantage that attends the beholding of Christ and it is this: It is an excellent way to win to steadfastness of spirit. Are there not some persons here that cry out, 'I am unstable as water, and that mars my excellency; how shall I win to a composed way of serving God? Give Christ a look and that is the way to win to steadfastness. This is clear, Psalm xvi, 8, 'I have set the Lord always before me. That was a strange word, 'I have set the Lord always before me''; was it not a pleasant object? But what of that? Therefore, 'I shall never be moved. My stability depends upon this, I have God always within sight. And I would say this, if ye be not within speaking to God, O be within looking to Him. Is there a person here that is not within gripping or speaking unto God? Yea, O be within looking to Him; for, though He were far off, ye may take a look of Him.

The eighth advantage that waits upon looking unto Christ is this: Give Christ a look and that is an excellent way to attain to tenderness. Peter's heart, in a manner, was like a rock before Christ gave him a look, and then, as it were, ye might have melted it to water. O tenderness! whither is it gone? And what is the reason we are so untender? It is because we are not much taken up in looking unto Christ. This is clear, if there be a person here that hath gotten a look of Christ, he will 'water his couch with tears'

The seventh consideration to press you to behold Christ is this, that the look ye get of Him here is but the fore-runner of a more excellent, transcendent, and permanent look of Him hereafter. Any person that hath given Christ a look here, O that satisfying look that he shall have of Him hereafter! I tell you nine differences between the look that a Christian hath of Christ here upon earth, and the look that he shall have of Him in heaven.

1st. The look of Christ that a Christian hath here is but a look through the vail, but there we shall see Him face to face.

2ndly. The difference between the look of Christ that a Christian hath here, and the look of Him which is above, is this, the look of Christ that we have here admits of interruptions, but the look of Him which is above, shall never be interrupted. A Christian will get a look of Christ here, but presently a cloud comes in between and interrupts the enjoyment; but there is no cloud in heaven. Blessed are the congregation that stand about the throne, they never cease to behold Him.

3rdly. A look that a Christian hath here of Christ, doth not complete his joy and satisfaction, but the look that a Christian shall have above, O, how shall it complete his joy and satisfaction! All the looks a Christian gets of Christ here are rather to provoke his appetite than to satisfy it. Would ye know the first day of a Christian's satisfaction? It is in the morning of the resurrection. This is

clear, Psalm xvii, 15, 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness. Might one say, 'O David, were you never satisfied? Were you not satisfied when you sang the sixty-third, the one hundred and forty-seventh, and the one hundred and forty-eighth psalms?' No, says David, 'I shall never be satisfied till the morning of the resurrection.

4thly. Here a Christian gets a look but of Christ's back parts; but there he shall see Him face to face. All these excellent sights we have of God here, are but a beholding of His back parts; but there we shall see Him face to face (Exod. 33, 23).

5thly. All the looks of Christ that we have here are but, as it were, the beholding of the picture of Christ; but there we shall see Him as He is. There is a great difference between the picture of Christ and the real substance of Him, and all the sights of Christ that a Christian hath here are but, as it were, His picture. This is clear, Numb. xii, 8, where God says of Moses' beholding Him - "And the similitude of the Lord shall he behold. And Ezekiel, giving account of the sight he saw, says, 'It was the appearance of the glory of God. But there we shall have a sight of an unvailed, of a real discovered Christ.

6thly. There is this difference between the look of Christ that a Christian hath here and that which he shall have of Him hereafter; the look that a Christian gets of Christ here may be abused; but the look that he gets of Him

above cannot be abused. Do we not often abuse our looks of Christ through pride? Do we not often abuse our looks of Christ through formality? And do we not often abuse our looks of Him through security? But these looks of Christ that are above cannot be abused; there is no abusing of enjoyments in heaven.

7thly. The seventh difference is this, all the looks of Christ that a Christian hath here doth not complete his conformity; but the everlasting and broad, immediate look of Christ that a Christian shall have above, shall complete his conformity. Our beholding of Christ in a glass makes us to be changed, in some measure, 'from glory to glory'; but, when we shall have an immediate sight of God, we shall be completely conformed to His image; there shall not be a spot in all our souls.

8thly. The eighth difference between them is, all the looks of Christ that a Christian hath here, never put him from that, 'O give, give; that is the language of a Christian; but, when once he shall get a sight of Him above, he shall be forced, in a manner, to cry out, 'Hold thy hand, for I have abundance now'. Do ye not long to get these looks of Christ that are above?

9thly. The last difference between them, is this, the sight of Christ that we have here doth not complete our love; but the sight of Him which we shall have above, shall complete our love. Then shall we have light and love of 'a large extent;' hope and faith shall then leave us; and

light and love shall walk in with us, and divide the spoil. There is this eighth consideration to press you to look to Christ: I entreat you to think what ye will do. O what intend you to do? Do you intend to let Christ go away, and not give Him one 'behold'? Think ye that this shall indeed be that which shall be told in heaven of you, 'I came to Glasgow, and Glasgow would not give Me one 'behold'.

The ninth and last consideration is this: If once thou lookest unto Christ, and beholdest Him, there shall be a knot of marriage made up between thee and Him, which all the world shall not be able to untie. O young women, young women, I entreat you, come and give Christ one look, and this shall be an eternal and excellent marriage knot that shall be cast between you and Him. I will tell you five things that do break the most near and intimate relations that are imaginable, and yet cannot break this knot of union.

1. Are there not many persons that stand in very near relations, that ingratitude will make to loose their knots? Then brethren, or intimate friends (a great relation), will say, 'Will I love an ungrateful friend any more :' But, be thou never so ungrateful, it shall never break the knot of union between thee and Christ; it may well get thee many strokes from Christ, but it will never break the union.

2. The second thing that will break knots of union and time most near relations among men, is sin. It will break

the knot of union between man and wife; adultery will break the marriage-knot; but no sin, O Christian, shall break the knot between thee and Christ; if thou shouldst play the harlot many hundreds of days, that will not break the knot. Blessed are we in this, that no sin shall break that knot of marriage.

3. This breaks knots of friendship between persons that will not break it between Christ and a soul, and that is, distance of place. When once we are long out of sight of such a friend, we forget him; but, O blessed be precious Christ, who, though He be living in heaven, distance of place doth not make Him to forget us. Blessed are we in this, that distance of place doth not break the knot of union with Christ; His heart is in Glasgow, if your hearts would be in heaven.

4. What breaks the knots of union among persons is passion and anger. Nothing would divide two friends sooner than passion and anger. However, Christ may be angry with thee, but He will not break His covenant. Let Him be angry at thee, and thou at Him, yet it shall not break the marriage-knot; yea, if ye should take both hands to break it, it should not be broken.

5. What breaks a knot of union that will not break it between Christ and thee, is this, prejudice and jealousy. Is there anything that makes persons to grow sooner heartless, one with another, than to have a suspicion and jealousy such a person doth not really love them? But, O,

blessed are we in this, for Christ hath no jealousy, and, as for us, no suspicion. Though it were our desire, we shall never come the length as to break the knot; yea, although thou wouldst break the knot, and scrape out thy name out of the marriage-contract, Christ would say, 'Thou shalt not get leave'. Many persons that have been married to Christ, have been brought to this, 'Give me a pen and I will scrape out my name out of thy contract'. 'No, says Christ, 'thou shalt not get leave, it shall stand there. Sir, now think what you shall say to it? I entreat you, think what you shall say to this bargain? And, being loath to leave it without gaining your consent to this excellent bargain, I shall tell you these four things, and I entreat and charge you, remember them.

1st. I say, know this, remember ye heard this once preached in Glasgow pulpit, 'Behold me, behold me'. And know it, the day is approaching when that verse shall come to thy mind, and thou shalt cry out, 'What was I doing that I would not give Christ a look- Yea, know it of a certainty, that when thou shalt be passing through the threshold of the doors of thy everlasting prison, this word shall come to thy mind, once I was bidden look unto Christ, and now whither am I going. When thou shalt cry forth with a dreadful lamentation, 'Whither are the undervaluers of Christ now going'? O I would never disobey that preaching if I heard it again.

2ndly. Know this, that all the persons within this church

shall be witnesses one against another, if they embrace not Christ. I make the supposition that you are the person to whom Christ should say, 'What was the reason that you would not give me one behold? I pray, what would you say, if Christ would come here tonight and ask every one of us, before we depart, 'What is the reason that you would not give Me one look? I pray you, what would you say? Think of it, what you shall answer unto Christ in that day, when He shall thus pose you?

3rdly. I would say this, there are two times approaching when you shall cry out, 'O for a preaching upon the first verse of the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. Shall not that be a day when thou shalt cry out, 'O, for a look of Christ, when thou shalt be standing near the gates of death, thou shalt cry out, 'O, for a command to look unto Christ? The second time is, when thou shalt be standing before thy judge. I know that a multitude of words will not persuade you.. There are these four things that I would say unto you; there are four sorts of persons that I fear are within these doors. Now the broad and everlasting curse of the eternal God will be upon the person, be he who he will, that is among these four. And,

(1) There are some of the Gadarenes among us, that cry out, 'O Christ depart out of our coasts! Are there not many here that would be content to give Christ a bill of divorce? I say, cursed art thou, be thou whom thou wilt. And,



(2) There are a second sort of folk that will be here today that will cry out, 'We care for none of these things; you press us to look to Christ, and what of that? I say, cursed is that person that is of Gallio's frame, who, let Christ and the minister press you never so much, will never give Christ one look. I say to thee, be it according to thy desire, thou shalt never get a look of Christ.

(3) I think there be many of Pilate's humour here today that cry out, 'I know nothing against the man whom you press us to behold; but, at last, you will consent to crucify Him. O know ye nothing against Christ, and will ye consent to crucify Him!

(4) There will be some here today of an Athenian frame, that will say, 'This man feigns to be a setter forth of strange gods. 'No, say I, 'I am no setter forth of strange gods; it is Jesus of Nazareth that I preach unto you, O Glasgow! Un-persuadable Glasgow! Will you not be persuaded to give Christ one look?

4thly. Now there is this, lastly, that I would say unto you, to press you to give Christ one 'Behold,' and it is this, if you - would ask all the angels in heaven, and all the saints that are round about the throne, they would all say this, O give Christ a 'behold'. Do not all that are round about the throne say, it is good to behold Him? Do not Adam and Eve say, it is good to behold Him? Do not Abel, and Enoch, and Noah say, it is good to behold Him? Do not Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob say, it is good to behold

Christ? Do not the twelve patriarchs say, it is good to behold Christ? Do not the twelve apostles say, it is good to behold Christ? And do not all His saints that have tasted of the sweetness of Christ say, O it is good to behold Him? And ought not our souls to say, and all in us to cry out, O it is good to behold Him? Now, will ye go away without giving your consent? O speechless Glasgow! hast thou that one word to say, I am content to take Him? O speechless and unpersuadable Glasgow, wilt thou once come to this length, to say that word to Him, I am content? Though thou cannot say it heartsomely, thou shalt never rue it; that word shall afford to thee everlasting joy. Some folk will be ashamed to speak their consent to a husband that is suiting them; but wilt thou speak thy consent to Christ with a look, if not with thy mouth. Christ desires no more, but that ye would now speak your consent to Him with a look, if not with thy mouth. Christ desires no more, but that ye would speak your consent to Him in a broad look, if thou cannot do it otherwise.

Now, are you persuaded? I shall say no more, but this book will be a witness against you. I am sure it is but a poor work, if ye will do no more, to give Christ a look. Shall I use any more arguments? Or shall I take it for granted that ye will not give Christ one look? I do not think Christ is to be beheld with bodily eyes; hut I think ye will do this, as if one were desiring another to behold a pleasant object, which they desire not to behold; they would put their hands upon both their eyes that they

might not behold. So, I think, ye will do with this intimation to behold Christ; for, if Christ were coming here Himself tonight, ye would put both your hands upon your eyes, that ye might not behold Him. Now, if this were the last word that I were to speak in the name of the Lord, I might say Glasgow is an unpersuadable and speechless place. O Glasgow, wilt thou not know the things that belong to thy peace, and begin a pursuit after the Son of God? I have three words to say unto you, and shall close.

(1) Believe it, though ye have undervalued Christ forty years, He is content now to take you. Old men, ye have your names, old undervaluers of the Son of God, will ye be content now to take Him? And, I say, though ye had never given Christ a look before, ye are welcome to give Him a look now.

(2) There is nothing should be pleasant to us, till once we have given Christ a look. And,

(3) I would say this to you, perhaps Christ is going away, and we are as great strangers to Him as before. O Glasgow, if thou couldst sing the fifth verse of the forty-second chapter of Job, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. O if thou couldst say that, then thou mightest indeed cry out, Now I wish I were, in a manner, blind, that I never saw another sight. To Him who can anoint your eyes with eye-salve, to see Him, we desire to give praise. Amen.

## STRANGERS CALLED TO BEHOLD CHRIST

Isaiah lxxv. 1 - I said, Behold Me, Behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My name.

We told you that Christ was presenting a great desire to you, and are there none of you presenting a desire to Christ? I shall tell you two great desires to present to Christ.

The first great desire that ye ought to present to Him should be this, "Lord ,Jesus, help me to receive my sight."

And there is a second great desire that ye ought to present to Him, and that is in Psalm xiii, 3, 'Enlighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." I would give you the advice that Abimelech gave to Sarah, let Christ be "the covering of your eyes," with whom you converse. I would say but this one thing, Christ is willing to satisfy all your senses. Will ye come? Will ye have the sense of sight satisfied? Does not Christ invite you in the text 'Behold me?" Would you have the sense of tasting satisfied? Is not this commanded in Psalm xxxiv, 8, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good?" Would you have the sense of hearing satisfied? Is it not His command, hear my Son and his gospel? Would ye have the sense of touching satisfied? Is it not this great command to Thomas, John xx,

27, Come, and 'reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side"? And would ye have the sense of smelling satisfied? Come to Him that is 'perfumed with all the powders of the merchant." I do think, the most part of us shall die strangers to Christ. I think, if we would ask the angels, what is Christ? they would say this, they could not tell. All the saints about the throne would say so, and all that have tasted of the sweetness of Christ, ask all of them, what is His sweetness worth? They would say they could not tell. Would ye ask the depth, as Job xxviii. 14. It would say, the price of Christ is not in me. Yea, all the gold that lies in the bowels of the earth says, it could not buy Christ. Wherewith then could ye buy Him? I say, with one look ye shall get Christ.

Now, in the forenoon, we spake a little to the first thing in the words, which is, that great command given to the Gentiles, 'Behold me." O wonder that ever there should have been such a word! What would ye have thought if all that is in this book had been in this frame, "Cursed be he that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law"? What if all had been like that in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus? Angels wonder that ever there was such a command, and all the saints that are about the throne, wonder; and let all who are here, wonder, that ever there was such a command.

I have some things to add upon this command. I shall

Speak to two or three things.

The first thing is, to point out a little the difference of the look of Christ that the saints have above, and that which is here. We are calling you to behold Christ, but they that are in heaven, have another look. I shall point out these eight or nine differences.

1. The first difference is, that look we have of Christ here is but a mediate look, but that which the saints have above is immediate. Here we behold Him but thro' the vail, thro' the dark vail of duties, and ordinances, and promises, and dispensations. O! but behold, above we shall have an immediate look; there shall not any thing intervene betwixt Christ and the soul; there shall be an immediate embracement of the Son of God. And, we think, these that have seen Him through the vail, will be longing when they shall have these immediate looks of him, when all these veils that are betwixt them and Christ, shall be rent from top to bottom. Are we not longing and groaning for that day when ye shall behold Him in glory?

2. The second difference is, that look we have here doth admit of interruption, but that which we have above shall have no interruption in it; there is no cloud, no night, no desertion there. There are no such complaints in heaven as this, "Why hidest thou thy face?" Or as that, "It is thirty days since I did behold the king," and "I have lived two years in Jerusalem, and have not seen the king's face." O

that look that shall admit of no interruption! It is an endless look that the saints shall have above. And think ye not that the naming of our looks to Christ should make us look and long for that day?

3. The third difference is, that look which we have here may be abused, hut that which is above, cannot. Here a Christian may abuse his look to Christ, through the pride of life. O! there is no abusing of that spotless look that we will get of Christ above.

3. The third difference is, that look which we have here is hut a beholding His back-parts; but there, we shall behold His face. Here we but see (as it were), 'the skirts of his garments', but there we shall see him face to face. And is not that a great difference?

5. The fifth difference is, that look which the Christian hath here doth not complete his joy. As long as he is here, he is spending his life in bitterness. Would ye know the first day that a Christian hath his joy complete? It is in the blessed morning of the resurrection; 'When I awake, I shall see thy joy,' saith David. O what joy the Christian shall have when Christ and he meet together; and He shall take the Christian in His arms, and say, 'Welcome, O friend,' even in that day when Christ and he shall meet together in the streets of the new Jerusalem!

6. The sixth difference is, that look which the Christian hath here doth not complete his conformity to Christ. O,

but the look we have above doth abundantly complete our conformity to Him! Know ye not that word, 1 John iii, 2, 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him'' (why so?) 'for we shall see him as he is.' That look of Him as He is, makes a complete conformity betwixt Christ and the soul, but all these looks that we have here do not complete our conformity. We must go to heaven, trailing a body of death; but the time approaches when we shall take our everlasting farewell of all our lusts and idols, and shall say, 'Farewell' with our hearts, we shall never meet again.

7. The seventh difference is, that look of Christ which we have here doth not complete our graces, hut that which we shall have above shall complete all our graces. Shall not love be complete, when we shall get our look of Christ above, and joy complete? O! then that which is in part shall be done away, when that which is perfect is come. O Christians, what a day shall it be, when faith shall say to love, I give my place to thee; and sight and love shall be the eternal company of the Christian?

8. The eighth difference is, that look that the Christian has here, is not perfect in its degrees. When we shall be able to behold Christ, and shall fall into a sight of Him; when we shall first see the Lord, we shall begin a song that shall never have an end. It is an endless look, a satisfying look, a soul-refreshing look. There is no work so



much as this in heaven. Would ye know what the saints in heaven are doing? They are said to be full of eyes, and not of tongues; for this reason, because they are more taken up with looking, than speaking; more in wondering than expressing; therefore, it is that they are said to have many eyes, and but one tongue.

9. The last difference is, that look of Christ that we have here, is but the look of an unknown Christ, of a strange Christ, of an unconceived Christ; but then we shall have a look of a known Christ, of an unveiled Christ, of a Christ that shall be well taken up and understood. These are the differences betwixt the looks here, and the looks that are above. When shall it be that the exercise of heaven and earth shall be all one?

I shall, in the next place, proceed to answer some objections of those who think they have never looked to Christ. Objection 1. 'O,' says some, 'I have never looked to Christ because I know not the day; and some folks can tell the time and place, when they have looked to Christ.'" I would say these four things to such: -

1st. There are few that win that length, John ix, 25, 'Whereas I was blind, now I see.'" You can say, 'Though I know not the time and place, yet sure I am, I see these things that were hid from mine eyes before.'"

I would say, 2ndly. It is not (may be) for your advantage to know the time that Christ keepeth in His own hand. It

is not always for your advantage to know the times.

3rdly. It is not absolutely necessary for a Christian to know the time when Christ and he first met. There are some that have met with Christ, and they neither knew the time nor place, nor the first discourse that passed betwixt Christ and them.

4thly. What knowest thou but He hath stolen away thy heart?

Objection 2. 'I know not if I have looked to Him; for since I began to look to Him, 'my bonds are strong!.''' I would say these three things to that person: - -

1st. Do not cast off thy faith because of that, nor dispute thy love; because there is nothing more ordinary to a Christian than this, to have the spirit under bonds, Heb. x, 32, 'But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions.'

2ndly. I say, the best way to win above these bonds, is not to reject thy faith, but to hold it fast. It is a poor thing in Christians, whenever they lose their feet, to let their hands go; when they begin to misbelieve, they run out of the land of the living.

3rdly. I say, comfort thyself, the day of the liberty of the sons of God is coming, when these bonds shall be taken

off thee; when it shall be said, O prisoner come out!

Objection 3. Some say, 'I have not these great attendances of the Christian's light and joy.' Psalm xcvi, 11, 'Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.' I would say these two things to thee: -

1st. Thy light and thy joy may be under ground until both appear together. May be Christ is trying the reality of thy faith, whether thou lovest Him rather than sense or sight. I will tell you what it speaks in Christians, if they get not all they sought for when they began with Christ, then they reject all. The reason is, many think more of sense than of Christ; yea, many professors think more of knowledge than of Christ. And,

2ndly, I will say this also, Christ is (may be) teaching thee to love Him more by faith than by sense.

Objection 4. 'O,' says some, 'I cannot pray, I never go to prayer but my tongue is still.' I would not have you mistaken, for there is a threefold silence a Christian may have in prayer, and ye may have greater liberty in them, than if ye would speak like an angel.

1st. There are some, when they are enjoying most of God, then the heart is enlarged with love; prayer has little upon the tongue that they can speak. Think ye Daniel was straitened when he saw the angel, and stood trembling; and John, in the Revelation, when he fell at

Christ's feet? Know ye not how a Christian, through a sight of Christ in prayer, will leave off speaking and wonder? A Christian sometimes will not get his enlargement expressed.

2ndly. It is divine silence when he has a deep impression of God's greatness and his own sinfulness. A Christian is never more enlarged, than when he cannot speak one word but that, Psalm lxxvii, 4, "Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak"; i.e., when his heart wrote uncleanness against himself, and his tongue could not speak. Sometimes his guilt seemed staring him in the face, that lie was stricken with dumbness, and could not speak one word. Ye would know, that sometimes, when Christians cannot speak their confession to God, they must roar. Then they are so put to it sometimes, that put a spear to their hearts, they could not speak one word. Know ye that word of David, Psalm xxxviii, 8, 'I have roared, by reason of the disquietness of my heart.'

3rdly. It is divine silence when a Christian is going to commend Christ, and, as it were, so silent a discovery of Christ is let out on him, that he charges himself with presumption, 'Shall I speak?' We are never put to question Christ thus, 'Shall I pray?' Know it, there is more expression in a little while's wondering, than in ten hours praying. There is, I confess, a silence that proceeds from a spirit of bondage; and, I think, a look of Christ is the way

to help it. I tell you, if your tongues speak no more than your hearts think, they will be oftentimes short. There are some folks' prayers that are nothing but a lying to the Holy Ghost; and in their prayers and confessions they lie, and as for their desires, they care no more for them than the dirt under their feet. It is a wonder we are not stricken dead in prayer, both ministers and professors. It is strange that Ananias and Sapphira were stricken dead for one lie, and we are not for so many; yea, may he for fifteen lies in one prayer. Will ye examine yourselves, O Christians, before whom ye speak!

Objection 5. Says the Christian, 'If ever I had looked to Christ, I would have had some desires to Him,' for, no doubt. they will be longing for these immediate looks of Christ. I would say these five things.

1st. There may be some Christians that may have ten desires for death, when not one desire for heaven; for thou mayest desire in reality death oftener in ten days, than thou wilt desire heaven in a month. And what is the reason of it? It is not from our hope, but from the cursedness of our heart, as Jonah desired rather to die, than to live; it was not for heaven he did it, but from the corruption of his heart, being disappointed by God.

2ndly. The second thing I would say is, one may have forty desires for death, when not one for the death of sin. Ye should desire the death of the body of death more.

3rdly. I think, a Christian may long to go away, and so to get his pass.

4thly. I entreat you, Christians, when you get a look of Christ, study to improve it. Would ye know what makes the Christian long so little? It is because he doth not improve his looks to Christ.

5thly. I confess, I think it no wonder that Christians long not for a look of Christ. Were ye never put to these three things? (1) O time, time, that passeth not away to let eternity come! Were ye never put to that, that ye would be content to shake the glass of your time, to win to eternity? That if it were in your own hand, ye would not lay it down upon the side, that it might not run, but would shake it?

(2) And were ye never put to that, to long for your light? 'Arise, my dove, my love, for your winter is past.'

(3) Were ye never like Sisera's mother, looking out at her windows and saying, 'Why stay his chariots so long?' And when death comes, ye would take it in your arms, and say, 'Welcome, O friend'? Know ye not what death is to a Christian? It is the putting off of your burdens; the day of death to all your sorrows, to all your iniquities, and to all your idols, to all your anxieties; it is the door whereby you must enter into all good eternally; and it is like Joseph's chariot, which was sent to bring Jacob down into Egypt. Where is your heart, O Christians?

Ought it not to be up in heaven? Where is your faith? Is it not there? I have but two or three things to persuade you to give Christ one look.

(1) I have nothing in commission but this. Now, what will ye send me away with? Will ye send me away with a blank? O that this congregation, that is much destitute of knowledge, would begin this night! For I defy all the ministers of the world to assure you that ye shall live to look to Him tomorrow; therefore, look to Him today.

(2) What know you, but one of you may break your neck? What do you know, but that it may be said this night, 'Rise, undervaluers of the gospel, and of the Son of God, and give an account in judgment'?" What would you say if that voice were heard this night? And what do you know but it will be? With what countenance would ye look Christ in the face? Ye would desire that ye were ground in pieces.

(3) I say, this very night, will ye be content to take Him? What arguments can be used more to persuade you? Is there any argument under heaven that can persuade you to take Him? O you despisers and slights of the Son of God! I charge you, as ye will answer one day, to take Him; and beware that that word shall not come upon you, 'His blood be upon us, and our children.' And know ye this, that the curses of one side of this book are able to smother ten thousand worlds? What will ye think then, when all the curses in this book shall light upon you?

Where shall ye flee in that day, when all that is in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, and 26th chapter of Leviticus, shall light upon you, and, and there shall be no redemption? Is there any redemption where Christ turns to be your enemy? Therefore, I say, this night look to the Son of God. Is it nomatter wherein ye trifle over your time? I say, be serious in this thy day. Old men, what say ye to it, ye that are near your graves? I would say this, 'I set life and death before you'; which will ye choose? It is Christ that is offered to you. Know this, that be what ye will, sirs, that are slighers of the gospel, that word in Isa. lxxv, 1, shall gnaw your consciences. Ye shall remember that day when ye shall be crying for mercy and ye shall cry out, 'Where now is the sligher of the gospel? I shall never any more have another offer. The day was when I was bidden take Christ, and give Him one look.' Therefore, before ye go, close the bargain this night. Ye know not, if ever Christ shall come again, and send His message to invite you to take Him. So again, what is your last report? Speak to Him, for ye know not but they may be His last words; let us, therefore, be entreated now to take Him Cursed be the person that will never see Him all their days. It had been better ye had never heard a word of Him. O! shall Christ in His face, and in His beauty, and in all the excellent offers of heaven, be slighted?

Now, know ye, the day is approaching, that thou shalt wish thou hadst never been born. Ye slighers of the great



salvation, ye shall cry out 'O that I had never been born!' Therefore I say, seeing Christ is in your offer, take Him, and take witnesses in heaven, that ye shall never have another. Now, old men, will ye take witnesses of this ye shall never have another but Christ? Young men, and young women, look to the Son of God, and it shall be one of the days of the Son of man to you. O, that look that Christ shall give to His own children when time shall be no more, when they shall be led with the Lamb about the rivers of living waters! Are ye all content? Will ye say nothing against it? Then I say, if it be so (which I fear is not so), blessed be he who embraces the Son of God; and cursed be the man or woman which takes Him not. Since ye are standing before the mountain of cursing or blessing, I entreat you, look to the Son of God, who, like the brazen serpent, can heal you from all your stings and iniquities. Now, to Him that can persuade you, and will one day stand to judge you, be praise for evermore. Amen.