

blissedness that are in heaven? What would you think to have Christ eternally in your arms? Would you have a description of heaven? It is Christ sitting in the midst, and all the eyes of these many precious thousands are fixed on him, and his eyes fixed on them. In short, it stands in these four.

*First*, Christ is looking to the saints, and their eyes are looking on him.

*Secondly*, The saints are eternally loving Christ, and Christ is eternally loving them.

*Thirdly*, They are eternally wondering at him, and he is eternally wondering at them; he is to be admired of all his saints, and glorified of all them that believe.

*Fourthly*, The saints are embracing Christ, and he is embracing them. O these soul-ravishing embraces of Christ in the arms of them that are begotten again unto a lively hope, there is no separation between Christ and them! I would wish that the desire of the Greeks, John xii. 21. were the desire of all that are here. 'We desire to see Jesus.' O if you had but one desire? to behold and get a sight of him, ye would get him for a desire? Shall ever these cursed eyes 'behold the Sun of righteousness, the noble Plant of renown?' O blessed are these that see him? Blessed are these that have their hope and expectation of seeing him? O blessed are these that are walking in their way? I shall say no more but this, a Christian, while he is here, he is both out of Christ, and in Christ, and going to Christ.

He is in Christ, in respect of faith; out of Christ, in respect of that endless complete conformity; and going to Christ, in respect of that endless immediate fruition of him; he is going to Christ, to have his eternal delights that are at his right-hand? O run, run, run, till the day that you shall have Christ unfolded to you, by his being in your arms, and shall be contained to cry out, 'Here I will rest, and make my eternal abode.'

*Now, to this Christ be eternal praise. Amen.*

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### SERMON XI \*.

2 COR. iv. 3. *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.*

THIS everlasting gospel that is preached unto you, 'is sent for the falling and rising again of many in Israel;' for as the gospel is to some that precious *foundation stone*, so likewise it is to others 'that stumbling-stone, and rock of offence upon whom it falls.' I may say to some that are here, I have the saddest news to tell you that ever ye heard, and that is, 'Jesus Christ

\* This Sermon was preached at the Eastwood.

is come into the world;' and the reason of this is, because tho' he be preached and holden out to you, 'yet ye do not accept nor embrace him as he is offered.' There is not one among a thousand that speaks this unto themselves, 'My soul hath said unto the Lord, thou art my portion, therefore will I hope in thee.'

The apostle here is vindicating his ministry, and to this purpose he brings in three notable grounds in the two former verses, for the vindication of it.

The *first* ground is this, that he was a man that did not run unsent; as in the twelfth verse. 'Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy we faint not;' as if he would say, 'This unspeakable gift of the Lord has been given me, to put me upon this ministry, therefore this is the ground why I gave not over, for all the discouragements I meet with.'

The *second* ground is this, that he had rejected all things for this ministry.

The *third* ground is set down in the second verse. That he had preached convincingly and plainly, even to the conviction of their own consciences, so as they could not but acknowledge he was sent of God. Now he comes in this verse to make an objection, as if the Corinthians had said, 'What needs all this Paul, if thou be such a man as thou sayest, show us the success of thy ministry?' and he answers that most sweetly in the third verse. Wherein ye may take notice of these three great reasons why this gospel was not effectual to these Corinthians.

The *first* great reason why this gospel was not effectual to these Corinthians is this, that there was a standing decree above their heads, that they were eternal heirs of wrath.

The *second* great reason why this gospel was not effectual to these Corinthians, is this, that great fellowship and correspondence that their hearts kept with the devil in the fourth verse. We suppose there is much implied in that word *in whom*; pointing out that Satan had a constant and most uninterrupted communion with them.

The *third* and last great reason why this gospel was not effectual to these Corinthians, is this, that Satan had cast a vail over their eyes, so that the knowledge and excellency of this gospel should not be embraced by them. But from this we shall observe these three doctrines.

The *first* doctrine in the words is this, that the gospel is hid and unknown, and availeth nothing to many that hear it. There are many, before whose eyes Christ is crucified, that will never get another sight of him but one, and that is, when they shall see him sitting on his throne, and rendering judgment upon them that have not obeyed the gospel.

The *second* doctrine in the words is this, that be the persons who will, to whom this gospel is preached, and is hid, and unknown, it is a certain forerunner of some sad destruction from the Lord; 'if it be hid, it is hid to them that are lost;' importing unsupportable and unspeakable ruin.

The *third* doctrine from the scope of the words is this, there may be much lively and sweet convincing truths holden out by the gospel, and yet not be for the profit of the hearers. This is clear by comparing the second verse with the third verse. And that is not the fault of the gospel, nor oftentimes of the preacher, so much as it is the fault of the hearers, that the gospel is hid and unknown.

But to come to the *first* doctrine in the words, which was this, that the gospel is hid and unknown, and availeth nothing to many that hear it; this is clear, Mark xi. 25. 'At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.' O think ye that Christ is thanking the Father that the gospel shall never do this place good? Isa. liii. 8. 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?'

Now we shall propose these eight respects wherein the gospel is hid to many that hear it. And,

*First*, It is hid and veiled to many in respect of the truths of it: there are many that hear this gospel that do not believe what is spoken by it, 1 Cor. i. 18. And in John v. 10. 'He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar.' There is not a sermon that ever thou heard and slighted, but thou says, 'O Son of God, thou lies: and O Father, thou lies:' and is not that a dreadful iniquity?

The *second* respect wherein the gospel is hid to many that hear it, is this, in respect of the beauty, sweetness, and excellency of it. There are many, that though they hear the sound of the words, yet as for the excellency and sweetness of it, they never see it. O sinners and strangers to Christ? saw ye never the beauty that is in this gospel? Was not the pearl of great price ever so much discerned by you, that ye were forced to take on resolutions to sell all ye have, and buy it.

The *third* respect wherein the gospel is hid to many that hear it, is this, peoples want of convictions of the necessity of this gospel, there are many, that this is the great work of the devil with them, never to let this enter into their bosom. That Christ and they are strangers together. This is the doctrine that Satan preaches within them, 'peace, peace, when sudden destruction cometh.' These are they that Christ spoke to, 'The whole need not a physician.'

The *fourth* respect wherein the gospel is hid to many that

hear it, is this, in peoples want of convictions of the disadvantages that wait upon these that slight this everlasting gospel. Are there not many that think that the slighting of Christ and the gospel shall never be laid to their charge? Such are these spoken of in Deut. xxix. 20.

The *fifth* respect wherein the gospel is hid to many that hear it, is this, in the want of the actual application of it. How often has Christ stood up in the congregation, and said, 'O sinners! will ye not take me?' And might he not have gone away with that complaint, 'A whole day have I stood up here in East-wood, and none would so much as give me a look?' Is there none saying, since the refusing of him has been my practice, I will take him now?

The *sixth* respect wherein the gospel is hid to many that hear it, is this, in the want of the distinct uptaking of the sinfulness of slighting the gospel. This is that scarlet transgression that has a speaking voice in heaven. I would only convince you of this mistake, and that is, when ye see any infirmity in any believing Christian, ye will wonder; but though ye see an unbelieving sinner, ye will not wonder.

The *seventh* respect wherein the gospel is hid to many that hear it, is this, the want of the experimental knowledge of the sweetness of this gospel, Luke xiv. 18. and downward.

The *eighth* and *last* respect wherein the gospel is hid to many that hear it, is this, in peoples want of the solid faith of these unspeakable advantages that wait on these that embrace this gospel, and take hold of the Son of God. O come and see whether Christ be worthy of that report that is made of him or not! And if ye find him not to be above these six reports, then I may say to you, ye shall have your liberty to go your way.

1. He is far above thy faith, stretch it to the utmost in believing all that has been said of him.

2. He is above thy desire.

3. He is above thy necessities, justification and salvation, reckon them as long as you will; come to him and thou shalt have more than thou can tell.

4. He is much above all that ye have heard tell of him.

5. He is above all the thoughts that ever ye have had of him. Thought ye him to be 'white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand? He is that bright and morning star, he is the root of Jesse, and the offspring of David.'

*Lastly*, Ye shall find him far above all that ever spoke of him. What have ye found of him that is the substance of this gospel? Come to him, and thou shalt find him much above all thy expressions. O Christians! did ye never see such a sight of Christ,

as made you cry out, for a hundred hearts to give him? And saw you never so much of him, as made you cry out, 'It is good to be here, and to make three tabernacles.'

But in the further prosecution of this truth, I shall speak to ten things that make this sin scarlet coloured and dreadful.

It is a sin against the greatest wisdom of God, and against the lowest step of his humiliation; and it is against his grace and design: and also, it is against his name that he desires to magnify above all his work. What was the most excellent act of his wisdom? Was it not the inventing of this gospel, 'and reconciling sinners to himself?' What was the lowest step of his humiliation? Was it not his coming into the world? And what was his name that he desires to magnify above all his works? Is it not his mercy? And what is that great desire of heaven to-day? Is it not this, O sinners! be reconciled to my Son? It is both the first and the last desire, that ye be reconciled to Christ. Now, put all these together, O what a sin it is to slight the Lord Jesus Christ.

The *second* aggravation of this sin, is this, it is a sin against that blessed consent and divine harmony that is between all the Persons of the blessed Trinity, to invite you to come in. O strangers to Christ! 1. The Father, the first Person of the blessed Trinity, bids you come away and take his Son, 1 John iii. 23. 'This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' 2. The Son, the second Person of the blessed Trinity, testifies his own consent, as it is in Matth. xi. 28. 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden.' 3. The Holy Ghost, the third Person of the blessed Trinity, gives his consent to the bargain. Rev. xxii. 17. 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come.' Shall the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, cry, O sinners! will ye come? And will ye yet stay? May I not ask this question at you, that the Lord asked Elisha, 'O sinners, why stand ye here? Why do ye not flee from him that is the avenger of blood, who will come upon you ere it be long?'

The *third* aggravation of this sin, is this all other sins laid in the balance with it, are nothing, John xv. 22. 'If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin:' as if Christ had said, 'Though sinners had broken the law ten thousand times, yet they had not sinned in respect of this aggravation;' and that is, because it is the sin the Holy Ghost is sent to convince us of, in John xvi. 8, 9. 'And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me.'

The *fourth* ground of this aggravation, is unbelief. It is a

most absurd and groundless sin; there is no pleasure in it. There is no sin that any commit, but they can render a reason for it, but none against this; that it might be fulfilled which is written in the law, 'they hated me without a cause.' O sinners, what ails you at Christ Jesus? I charge you, by all the dreadful disadvantages that shall wait on all these slights of the gospel, that you would now come and take him: there is that word, Jer. viii. 9. and 2 Thess. ii. 3. 'They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?'

The *fifth* aggravation, is this, the excellent names that this gospel gets. Must it not be an excellent thing? It is called, 'the wisdom of God,' in 1 Cor. i. 24. And must it not be an excellent thing, that is called, 'the word of reconciliation?' And it is called, 'the field where the pearl of great price is:' as in Matth. xiii. 44. O stand in awe lest the sin of slighting of Christ provoke him to depart from you.

The *sixth* aggravation is this, that Christ is come so low in his terms, and therefore if you slight him, it must be a non-such transgression. O how low is he come. There are none here but they may have him for a hearty desire, and a look. 'Now, why will ye die, O house of Israel?' The market is now at the lowest, therefore sit not your time, but come and buy him.

The *seventh* aggravation is this, 'The gospel is a mystery the angels desire to pry into:' as what is the expression of all these blessed troops that are about the throne, Rev. xi. 17. 'Saying, 'We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, hallelujah, and praise.' As it were, Christ is indeed the gospel seen and heard in heaven.

The *eighth* aggravation of this sin of unbelief, is from the names it gets in these scriptures.

*First*, It is called, Heb. x. 29. 'A treading of the Son of God under foot.' Now is there a person here that is not doing so.

The *second* name it gets in scripture is, it is called, 'A despite done to the Spirit of grace.' It is a resisting and proclaiming war against the Son of God.

The *third* name it gets in scripture is, it is called, 'A putting him to open shame,' Heb. vi. 6.

The *fourth* name it gets in scripture is, it is called, 'A casting of God behind your back,' 1 Kings xiv. 9. Ezek. ii. chap. What a scarlet transgression must this be, 'To cast Christ behind your back?'

The *fifth* name it gets in scripture, is in Isa. liii. 2, 3. There are eight expressions there, all tending to one thing. Now seeing it is so, what answer will you make or give to Christ?

The *ninth* aggravation is this, it has a most immediate hand in ruining of many souls in the world. Ye know what and who

they are, that are to be excommunicated from the presence of God, they are mentioned in Rev. xxi. 8. 'The fearful and unbelieving, they shall go first to hell.' O may I not ask you this one question, 'How think ye to escape, if ye neglect so great salvation?'

*Tenth and lastly*, Unbelief is the sin that will bring on many constant and unspeakable ruins. O misbelievers, and slow of heart to take up that which Christ has revealed in scripture, read your doom, in John iii. 18, 36. 'He that believeth not, is condemned already;' he is as sure in hell, and in the devil's arms, as if he were in it already; he is condemned in respect of the sentence of the law. Will ye go to God, and ask, am I the man that is condemned already? The second word in the 36th verse, 'He that believeth not the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him.' It shall not be a pilgrimage, it shall never flit; for when once the mercy of God in his word, hath spoken its last word, then the justice of God comes, and says, 'Here I abide,' I pray you consider, 'lest, ere it be long, repentance be hid from your eyes, and that these things that belong to your peace be shut from your eyes;' I intreat you, if there be any beauty in Christ, and joy to be found in him; I intreat you, by all the promises of the covenant, and by all the threatenings denounced against the slights of the gospel, to come this night, and tell that you would have Christ. And believe it, Christ is as willing to take you, as ye are to have him. I would have you to consider:

1. That the day is coming, when there is not a man nor a woman that is within these doors, that has heard this gospel, and slighted it, but they shall cry and shriek for the day that ever they were born.

2. Consider, sinners, ye that are old, posting towards eternity, what do ye know but this shall be the last preaching that ever ye shall hear? As the causes of your fasts speak of the great sickness that is amongst you, what wot ye, but ere twelve hours at night, that voices shall cry, 'Awake, traitor, and come to judgment.'

3. Consider Christ is here, though we see him not: and what is he doing? He is even waiting for your answer. Ye are called here to-day to mourn for your former slights of the gospel: and he desires no more, but that you would come to him. What ails you? For I am persuaded that all the advantages that ever could commend another, they are infinitely in him. What would ye have in a husband? Is it beauty? 'He is fairer than the sons of men.' Is it riches? 'He is Lord of all the earth.' Is it wisdom? 'Is it not in him, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom, yea, in whom the God-head dwells bodily?' O come, and ye may see in him all that is to be desired. But,

*Lastly*, We shall speak of some impediments, that make the hearers of this gospel fall so little in love with the Son of God.

*First*, The most part are not convinced of the very truth of this gospel. There are two strange complaints of Christ in John iii. 11. 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we spake that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.'

The *second* impediment that makes the hearers of this gospel fall so little in love with the Son of God is, the most part are not convinced of their need of Christ: therefore, when Christ's disciples had been spoken to on that purpose, why they were so few that did embrace him, he says, 'The whole not a physician?' I may commend need from two things: *First*, It answers all objections. There are many will say, I cannot come to Christ, because I fear I be not welcome; another will say, I would come, but I have not that measure of holiness that I would have; another will say, alas! I would come, but I cannot get up my heart to him. But I may say that of necessity, which Solomon says of money, 'It answers all things.' *Secondly*, Unbelief would have a sinner through many back-gates, but necessity leads people the high way to Christ.

The *third* impediment that makes the hearers of this gospel fall so little in love with the Son of God, is, there is in every heart of men and women, something that hinders them from making use of this gospel of Jesus Christ. The thing that hinders me from coming to Jesus Christ is, they say, I would come, but he will not accept of me. But I dare say, you lie. For Christ knows where to father unbelief as well as ye; and yet he tells you, 'ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.' Never father your unbelief upon the devil, nor temptations, and want of thorough humiliation; father it on this, ye have no will to the bargain.

The *fourth* impediment that makes the hearers of this gospel fall so little in love with the Son of God is, there are many people that do not believe the freedom of the gospel; there are some that would divide the two covenants, they would take a piece of both; but these persons will never come speed.

The *fifth* impediment that makes the hearers of this gospel fall so little in love with the Son of God is, desperate worldly-mindedness. What hinders many? it is a wife, or land, or a house.

The *sixth* impediment that makes the hearers of this gospel fall so little in love with the Son of God is, people are not convinced in their own hearts, that there is no other way, nor no other name whereby they can be saved, but by Christ.

The *seventh* impediment that makes the hearers of this gospel fall so little in love with the Son of God is, there are many that are strangers unto these three things: *First*, They are strangers

unto this, that the curse of God is lying upon them for sin. *Secondly*, There are many that are strangers unto the dreadful consequences that wait upon these. *Thirdly*, They are strangers unto the sweetness and non-such advantages that these that wait upon God get; it is like, that may be said of many, which is said of the Jews, in another case, 'That when Moses is reading, the vail is upon their eyes.' So likewise when Christ and the gospel is preached unto you, ye cannot take up that ravishment, and soul-breaking that is in it. But,

The *eighth* impediment that makes the hearers of this gospel fall so little in love with the Son of God is, there are many that are seeking more after the approbation of men, than after divine approbation, John v. 44. 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only.'

The *ninth* and *last* impediment that makes the hearers of the gospel fall so little in love with the Son of God is, that cursed correspondence that is betwixt us and our idols. What shall I say? shall I leave you? But before I end, I would ask some questions at you.

The *first* question I would ask at you is, is there any in heaven that is comparable unto Christ? Is there any that has that transcendent worth that is in him? Now since he has no match, what ails you at him? Does not your light say, O precious Christ! 'Thou art fairer than any of the sons of men?' And yet do not your idols say, I am fairer? And there is some that are saying, O precious Christ! thou art worth ten thousand of my idols, and yet your affections are more knit to your idols than to Christ.

The *second* question I would ask you, is this, is there none here to-day that is convinced, that this gospel in former times has been hid from them, and that the devil has been sitting within the temple of their hearts, and ruling in it.

The *third* question I would ask at you, is this, Do ye believe that eternity is approaching, and that these eye-strings of yours, ere it be long, shall break, and your desire shall fail?

The *fourth* question I would ask at you is this, do ye believe, that, ere long, ye shall pass betwixt the first and second gate of death? If it were believed, we would not live at so great distance from God.

The *fifth* question I would ask at you, is this, do ye believe, that ere it be long, Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and this treaty of peace, that is betwixt Christ and sinners, shall be broken up? Are there not some here, that would ask the question, O has Christ, has Christ spoken his last words to me?

The *sixth* question I would ask at you, is this O slighers of this gospel, and undervaluers of the Son of God! what ex-

cuse will ye make to Christ, when ye shall see him sitting on the clouds, with a white robe, and when he will call every one here by their names? Why do ye slight me? We know your answer will be, Oh! and alas! that I had never been where the gospel was. God grant this be not your case. Amen.

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## WORD OF EXHORTATION

BY

*Mr. ANDREW GRAY, before the Communion of Glasgow before the Action.*

I SHALL not speak much to you, I would only say this, there are six most speaking evidences, that these days will be dreadful days to Glasgow; and ere long the ministers and people shall be put to propose that prayer to God, "Oh that we had never had a name!" Give me leave to say it, I think he must needs be said to prophecy, who shall say, the dreadful fruits of these two days shall be seen many days hence.

The *first* sad evidence that these days will be dreadful days, is this, want of tenderness. I suppose, few tears have been shed since Glasgow's communion began. I think, we are as little moved, when we are feasting with Christ, as we were feasting with a stone.

The *second* sad evidence that these days will be dreadful days, is this, there was never less pains taken for such a solemn ordinance, as has been by many of us. What are we doing? I know, if we saw it, many of us are rushing upon the edge of Christ's eternal displeasure.

The *third* sad evidence that these days will be dreadful days, is this, is there any here to-day, to whom Christ's withdrawing from these solemn ordinances, is their burden? May not this be written, "O Glasgow! Glasgow! on all your communion tables, "Christ is gone, Christ is gone?"

The *fourth* sad evidence that these days will be dreadful days, is this, the little longing that we have after Christ, and a crucified Saviour. In a manner, I think, there are some of us that have lost all that desire which we seemed to have. For Christ may seem to come, and go without observation of us all, I would ask this at all of you, is there a desire with you to feast with Christ to-day? I know, if you saw him, ye would not know him: yea, some, I know, knows not if there be a Christ there or not.

The *fifth* sad evidence that these days shall be dreadful days,