

A

SPEECH

BY

*Mr ANDREW GRAR, at Kirklistoun, before the Communion,
upon the 12th of June, 1653.*

THE subject of what I am to speak upon to you at this time, shall be of the everlasting joys of heaven, that are preached unto the saints, that so your hearts may long and breathe for the excellent and most glorious mansions and habitations provided for the saints. And that which I shall speak, I shall reduce to these things.

First, I would give you a short description of heaven. And we conceive there are these three descriptions that we may give you of that excellent and precious place provided for the saints.

The *first* description of heaven is this, it is a rest without a rest. This is clear, by comparing Heb. iv. 9. 'There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God,' with Rev. iv. 8. It is said, 'These who are about the throne, rest not day and night, crying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,' &c. So compare these places together, and ye will see heaven is a rest without a rest. They rest not, and yet it is a precious rest to the saints, never forbearing to give praise to him.

The *second* description of heaven is this, it is a place where the soul is always satisfied. It is a place where the soul has always a sight of God, and yet desiring always a sight of God. It is a place where the soul is always embracing God, and yet desiring to embrace him. It is a place where the soul is always feeding, and yet never satisfied. Would ye know what is in heaven? I tell you, in a word, there is satisfaction in heaven, and there is hunger in heaven: they are always satisfied, and yet always hungry. But know, that heaven is full of mysteries, sirs.

The *third* description of heaven is this, it is a place where joy and love are eternally flowing in, and admiration and praise eternally flowing out. And ye shall know why they speak not much there, because all their language is almost, 'Hallelujah, praise to the Lamb, that sits upon the throne.' The reason is, because there is much admiration: there they wonder much, therefore they cannot stay to speak much. O what would you think, but one half hour to be taken in within the ports of that blessed city, and to hear that heavenly music? O but heaven be a pleasant place.

Secondly, That which I would speak upon is this, the exer-

cise of the saints there. I think, there are five things that take up the saints exercise above. 1. Admiration. 2. Praise. 3. Joy. 4. Love. 5. The beholding of Jesus's blessed countenance. Admiration, praise, joy, love, and sight, are much of their exercise in heaven. There is not one look there, that is not fixed on precious Christ. There is not one moving of the tongue in heaven that is not taken up in commending precious Christ. There is not one moving of the feet there, that is not taken up in following of him. There is not one moving of the hand in heaven, that is not taken up in infolding precious Christ. There is not one thought there, that is not taken up in thinking on precious Christ. There is not one desire in heaven, that is not taken up in desiring of precious Christ. What makes heaven such a heartsome house? Is it not precious Christ? Rev. xxi. 23. 'And the Lamb is the light thereof,' as if John would have said, 'Heaven would be but a dark house, if He were not there:' but Jesus is the light of that city. O! know ye heaven, sirs? If ye knew it, how would ye long to be there, in eternity, where all the Persons in the Trinity cry, 'Come up hither to us who are here!' And all the angels and saints cry, 'Come up hither to us who are here!' It is good to be there. Now if ye would be taken up in longing to be there,

I will give you, in the *third* place, some hid draughts of the excellences of heaven. Do you not know, heaven is a pleasant place? But what makes it pleasant but this, that the windows and whole streets of it are sprinkled over with the roses of Sharon, and lily of the valley. And I will give you these stairs of the excellency of the higher house. O what a brave sight was it John saw, Rev. xxi. 9. 10. 'And he talked with me, and said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me to an exceeding high mountain, and showed me the holy city, the new Jerusalem?' And was not that an excellent sight?

First, This commends heaven; we have there the soul-satisfactory vision in beholding of God; there we behold God face to face. And is not that an excellent sight? Here we behold Christ but through the vail of ordinances, 'and see him darkly, as through a glass;' here we but see him through the lattice; 'but they see him there face to face.' I know not what will be the bride's thoughts, when Christ shall take her first in his arms. Ye know there is such a thing, as we call the kindness of heaven; but, alas! we know it not: but what shall be your thoughts when Christ shall take you in his arms, if that ever he take you? I think, we shall fall asunder. O! is not heaven an excellent place? I would say this to you, we think there are these six

questions that may arise with a Christian, and he may ask them all at Christ; and O that we were asking them oftner.

The *first* question that we may be put to propose to Christ, is this, shall ever this tongue, that hath so often broken the third command, and polluted the holiness of God, be made like the tongues of angels, to express the virtue of Jesus Christ? Ye shall wonder to hear yourselves speaking in heaven. Ye shall cry out, when ye hear yourselves speaking of Christ in heaven, is this ignorant I?

The *second* question that we may be put to propose to Christ, is this, shall ever these eyes, that hath been the windows through which many iniquities have been conveyed into the soul; shall ever those eyes, that have wandered, and loved, and looked so much on vanity, be admitted to behold the excellent and spotless One, that sits upon the throne? I think, the first hour a Christian shall see Christ, if there were hours in eternity, (in a manner) he would wink, when he shall look him in the face, and shall see his face, his transforming face! where will we turn our eyes? A sight of Christ will make us eternally wonder. Are ye groaning for a sight of Christ? There are some that would never desire another sight than they see. O think ye not fifty years a long time to be out of the precious presence of Christ? Are ye not longing, old men, think ye not long to die, and be dissolved?

The *third* question that we may be put to propose to Christ, is this, shall ever these ears, which have hearkened to so much cursing of God, and have taken such delight to hear vanity, ever hear these songs above? There is one of two things we must hear: *First*, We shall either hear the eternal shriekings of the souls in prison, every one crying out, alas, for evermore! never a word heard almost, but, alas! O there is a strong yelling there! O what a dreadful thing were it, to hear them one half hour crying! *Secondly*, Or then, ye shall hear that excellent music, and that excellent concord that is amongst all the higher harpers! O how sweetly do they sing! Now comfort yourselves with this. The day is coming, when ye shall hang your harps no more on willow-trees, because ye are in a strange land, but shall eternally cry out, 'praise to him that sits upon the throne!'

There is that *fourth* question ye may be put to ask, shall ever these feet of ours, that have walked so much after vanity, and pursued folly; shall ever these feet follow the Lamb wherever he goeth? I think, it will be a wonder, if ever the sound of many of our feet be heard in heaven! O what a pleasant thing is it to walk through the valley of delights! If so we may speak, Christ leads the ring in heaven, he goeth foremost, and all the children of the house go at his back. Think ye eternity will be a long

time? Alas! I think it shall be short: they shall not count a thousand years in God's sight one day.

The *fifth* question that we may be put to ask, is, shall ever these hearts of ours, which have been a cage of all unclean birds, and a house to idols, shall they be made an habitation, and a dwelling place for the Holy Ghost?

The *sixth* and *last* question that we may be put to ask is, think ye that these hands, that have been the instrument of so much mischief, and committed so much iniquity, shall ever in-fold that matchless Object, who sits upon the throne? O! what will you do, when you get Christ first in your arms? I confess, I know not well, if the first day of your being in heaven, sirs, be the pleasantest day, I think not, even though ye never saw your husband before, the longer ye be there, ye will love him the better. What shall I say there is in heaven? There is no outcast in heaven between Christ and the saints, there is no desertion, no unbelief, no misconstruction of Christ, no debating of his wisdom; in a manner, when we go through the gates of the New Jerusalem, there is the grave of desertion, and the grave of jealousy, and the grave of our misbelief, and the grave of all our idols, and we shall never follow them any more. O! may ye say, will not faith leave me, and hope leave me, when I come to the gates of heaven? Yes, faith and hope will leave thee there. But what a pleasant day will it be, when faith shall yield itself to love and sight! Faith and hope are the attendants of the Christian here: but love and sight shall be the eternal attendants of the Christian above. As it were, faith and hope fight the battle, and love and sight sit at home, and divide the spoil. Faith and hope embrace Christ through the vail; but love and sight embraces Christ with the eyes. We must leave our faith and hope, but we shall never weep for the leaving of such a companion. We may say that word, Heb. xi. 32. 'And what shall I say more, time would fail me.' What shall I say more to the commendation of heaven? Time would fail me. Yea, what shall I say more of eternity? Time would fail me. There is this I would say more, Though I must end my discourse with this, 'What shall I say more?' There are six complaints amongst Christians here.

First, There are some Christians that are weeping in secret under their ignorance and presumption, saying, I am more brutish than any man, I have not the understanding of the holy: I never saw such a blind ignorant as I am, but comfort yourselves in this when first ye shall enter the gates of that blessed city, all your clouds shall shed, there shall not be a wrong thought or conception of God throughout all eternity; and ye shall begin to say to yourselves, is this ignorant I, and brutish I?

The *second* complaint among Christians here is, I am under much desertion; I never go to pray, but I meet with an absent God, a veiled Christ, an angry Christ, and then I cannot speak to him: but comfort yourselves in this, there is no desertion in heaven; there is no such complaint in all the higher house as this, • How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thy face from me? Though I confess it is no wonder, to go to heaven with a veiled Christ, because when he is sent to us, we know not how to entertain him. I know not what your faith is; but it is a mystery to some folk; faith that they shall never weary of the service of heaven, is a mystery; or will it not be a mystery, and a great wonder, if we, who cannot pray one half hour to an end, but we will be toiled, as if we had done some marvellous work, shall never weary of that service? But comfort yourselves with this, ye shall through all the ages of eternity praise him, and never weary. O blessed are they that are above. There is no wearying in heaven; but, alas! few of us shall go there.

The *third* complaint amongst Christians here is, Alas! I know not whether I shall go to heaven or not; I am little taken up in disputing my interest, or questioning the reality of my faith. I would say this, I would fain it were come the length of a dispute. I know there is much disputing; but, alas! we dispute more with our light, than with our conscience. There is much exercise amongst us; but, I fear, it is more the exercise of the light of our judgment, than of our conscience. The most part of our Christianity is in our light. Be not mistaken, for I wonder, if our exercise were in our conscience, that we could dispute our interest one day, and not be in hazard to be distracted. There is no doubt, in heaven, when ye go thro' the threshold of that divine entry, ye may say, farewell disputing and debating.

The *fourth* complaint that some are troubled with here is, alas! I have no love to Christ. And I think, it is true, in relation to many of us: O! whither is love gone? I suppose, that if angels would come and speak to some of our hearts; I warrant, that there are some, if this were their last confession, might say, love is gone! but comfort yourselves in this, love will be much of your exercise in heaven! Sometimes we are put to dispute, whether or no the saints exercise love to any beside Christ? Do not mistake it, one saint shall not hate another saint: but, I may say, one saint shall not love another saint. My ground is this, I know not, if they will have any love to spare to any thing beside Christ; neither do I think they have any thought on any other but on Christ. O to be near him!

The *fifth* complaint that many will say here is, alas! I will never never prevail over my idols, and get them forced out of

my heart. There are some of us that will go down to the grave with their idols in their hearts: but, O! what think ye of heaven? All your idols shall be mortified ere ye go there. It is a mystery to some, if that these idols they were wrestling with all their days leave them! I think, there are some would wish mortification were not lawful. I think, there was never such a generation as most of us are, when we come to the church and sit down, and when we rise up, we may cry out, we want mortification; O we want it! Dare I say, there are some who have the profession of religion, and are drawing Jesus at their heels, and embracing idols in their hearts. I say, your religion is not much worth, if ye want mortification. O believe it, it is the ruin of many that are talking and speaking of Christ, and will not for their pleasure mortify their predominant lusts. O that cursed tongue, that has spoken much of Christ, perhaps with it you may curse him eternally. Know, it is not much to be a tongue Christian. I know what makes our religion prove false, we take it up before it takes us up. Many of us take it by guess. I desire not to prophesy sad things; but, believe it, if religion were more out of fashion, Christ would have fewer followers; it is much to love a persecuted Christ. It is much to love Christ, when ye must lay down all that ever ye have, or else he will not own you. We follow Christ because of the loaves, and not because of the virtue of him. Alas! there are some that are knit to Christ with a very small thread; however, your idols will forsake you, when ye are gone to heaven.

The *sixth* and *last* complaint that troubles some here is, alas! I never prayed with delight. It is true, there are many that go about duty, and I will tell you the end of it, it is to satisfy a natural conscience: will ye search it, and ye will find it to be a truth. There are ten for one, that would rather be at peace with their consciences, than be at peace with God. It is your great design to go about duties to silence your conscience. You would pray less, come to the church less, and read the scriptures less, were it not for your conscience. O there are some, would fain be quit of their conscience. I shall not stand to speak any longer of the joys of heaven, I shall say this, the Father, the first Person of the blessed Trinity, cries out, come up hither to us who are here! Christ, the second person of the blessed Trinity, cries, come up hither to us who are here? And the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the blessed Trinity, cries out, come up hither to us who are here! And the joys of heaven, if they had a tongue, would cry out, O come up hither! Doth not that sweet and blessed transcendency in the face of Christ, cry out, come up hither to us? Doth not our necessity cry out, go up hither?

There are some that think to speel up to heaven by the short ladder of presumption. O think ye ever go to heaven, will we be all there, where we will fight no more? Think ye, our lodging will be taken up in one place at night? I dare not say, but there will be strange divisions amongst us, and we know not if we shall meet again. There may be some of us in eternity ere it be long; and it is not much matter, for eternity is sweet to go to heaven. I remember a word in Job ix. 25. 'Now my days are swifter than a post; they flee away as the ships;' or, as the word is, 'They pass away as the ships of desires.' To Christians, death clips the thread of their life, but it makes up the everlasting knot betwixt Christ and them; death is your friend, ay, death is the coronation day of the Christian; death is Christ's messenger to bring home the Christian. Ye know, great princes and kings, when they are crowned, when they send for their bride, send a great convoy to her. But this is Christ's messenger to his bride, even death. Sometimes Christ will send death with a letter of commendations, and that is to speed her; and sometimes Christ will send death with a love letter in his hand, and that makes her shout for joy. O let us love him therefore, and long to be with him for evermore. *Amen.*

WORD OF EXHORTATION,

BY

Mr. ANDREW GRAY, at Kirklistoun, upon the 12th of June, 1653.

FIRST TABLE.

I Suppose, there are some of us here the day, that it had been better for us we had been at a mountain side. I suppose, there are some of us here the day, that would have given their consent to the murdering of Christ Jesus. I think faith is away, and God away too; and would you know the reason of it? It is, we feed and feast without Christ. I do not desire to enter upon a description of Christ, neither do I desire to conceal his comely beauty. But, O believers, and expectants of heaven! there are five parts of Christ's blessed body that might overcome you, and constrain you to cry out, that ye are content to take him.

First, Does not the face of Christ overcome you? And is not