

## THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED

***1 Cor. ii. 2.—“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”***

In the preceding words, the Apostle begins a vindication of the manner of his preaching, which he says “was not with excellency of speech or of wisdom.” And ver. 4th, he adds, “My speech and my preaching was not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.”

It appears there were in his days, as there are in ours, many who greatly admired a fine style; not so much regarding the subject-matter of a sermon, as the preacher's language and manner of address. Of this sort were they who had been instructed in the Platonic philosophy before their conversion to Christianity, and were for introducing among the preachers of that religion, what they called *Plato's gracious manner*.

The Apostle frequently in his epistles declares against this piece of vanity, as very much below the dignity of the Gospel. He did not study pompous words curiously arranged, and rhetorical harangues, or nicely adjusted periods, to tickle the ear and please the fancy of those who pretended to a refined and polite taste in these matters. And the reason for this part of his conduct is assigned in the text; *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

...The special consideration of Christ which he singles out from among all the rest, to be the subject of his preaching, namely, *Christ crucified.*

It is not Christ risen, Christ ascended, and sitting at the right-hand of God, clothed with all power, that he pitches on, though these views of him were more likely to have recommended him to the world: but, behold! he singles out that very circumstance concerning Christ, which, of all others, neither Jews nor Gentiles were able to endure; and that was, his being nailed to a cross till he died! "Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." And, indeed, he was so to Paul himself, as much as to any man, before his conversion; for he was, by his own acknowledgment, "a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious." Nay, we find the disciples could not bear the intimation of Christ's death when it was made to them by himself: Peter remonstrates against it vigorously.

The truth is, these good men laboured under the prejudices of a Jewish education; and they never awaked fully out of the dream of a temporal kingdom, until the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came down upon them, and cleared up the mystery of the cross unto them: and then, indeed, they went forth with boldness, boasting and glorying in that very thing which the world thought a badge of shame and infamy. And now, methinks, this determination of the most famous preacher and apostle of the Gentiles furnishes us with a lesson very suitable to the occasion of our meeting here this day, namely, "That the doctrine of Christ crucified, is that which ministers of the gospel should chiefly study to know and to make known among the people."

(Select Sermons by Thomas Boston... Edinburgh: A. Fullarton & Co., 1850, 1-2, 3-4, e-book, Text and paragraph structure modified)