

Confession With The Mouth

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon emphasizes that true salvation involves not only believing with the heart but also boldly confessing Christ with the mouth through a consistent Christian life and public profession.

Scripture: Romans 10:10, Acts 2:42, John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 11:24-25

Topics: "Faith and Confession", "Christian Life"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the vital connection between heartfelt faith and outward confession as taught in Romans 10:10. He explains that true Christian confession is not merely verbal but encompasses a consistent life of worship, participation in ordinances, and fellowship with the Church. Spurgeon challenges believers to boldly profess their faith even in the face of opposition, emphasizing that faith without confession is incomplete and dead.

Transcript

"With the heart man believes unto righteousness. And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
Romans 10:10.

THIS morning, according to my promise, I discourse upon the second part of this verse—"With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." I feel a measure of regret that all my hearers of this morning were not present last Sunday, since you may wrongly imagine that I exaggerate the importance of outward confession. Whereas had you been present when we were considering the first sentence, you would have seen that I magnified the "believing with the heart." I declared it to be the all-important, the essential thing without which confession with the mouth would be a sin, a falsehood, and a grievous insult to the Most High. One circumstance greatly mitigates my fears—you may all read both sermons at your leisure, and so see for yourselves how earnestly I have labored to put the two duties in their proper place, not unduly exalting the less, nor depreciating the greater.

"With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." There must be no confession with the mouth where there is not a believing with the heart. To profess a faith which you have not is to make yourself a deceptive trader who pretends to be carrying on a very large business, while he has no stock, no capital, and is only obtaining credit on false pretences, and so, is a thief. To make a profession, without having a possession, is to be a cloud without rain—a riverbed choked up with dry stones—utterly without water. It is to be a mere play-actor, strutting about for an hour with the name and garments of a king, to be exchanged, behind the scenes, for the garb of poverty and the character of shame.

Without believing with the heart, confession is as a rotten tree, green on the outside, but inwardly, as John Bunyan pithily puts it, "only fit to be tinder for the devil's tinder box." Be you warned against fair pretensions where there is nothing to back them up. Above all things, avoid hypocrisy! Stand aside from all mere pretense. Profess not to be what you are not, lest in that day when God comes to search the secrets of all hearts you shall be condemned as reprobate silver and consumed like dross.

True faith, wherever it exists, produces works. And, among the best works, a bold, constant, consistent confession of Christ. That man has no faith at all who is not led to confess with his mouth unto salvation, in the sense intended in the text. Faith without works is a dead root, sending forth no bud and yielding no fruit. It is a well yielding no water, but filled with deadly vapor. It is a tree twice dead, plucked up by the roots—like some of those forest monsters which block up the navigation of the Mississippi and form dangerous snags—upon which many a goodly vessel has been wrecked.

Faith without works is one of the most damnable things out of Hell. Flee from it, for remember if you profess to have a faith in Christ, and your conduct is not holy, you bring disgrace upon the Church of Christ! You crucify the Lord of Glory afresh. You turn the Truth of God into a lie. And you do, as far as lies in your power, make God the panderer to your lusts. As you are to flee from profession without faith, so equally flee from a faith which does not bring forth a good profession which may be manifested before many witnesses.

I believe that the confession mentioned in the text embraces the whole of Christian life. I do not think it means the mere saying, "I am a disciple of Christ," or submission to the God-ordained rite of Baptism. The Apostle includes, under the term, confession with the mouth, the whole life of the Christian—which is, in fact, the working out of that which God has worked in. It is the confession, both by act, deed and word, of that Divine Grace which God, by His Holy Spirit, has put into the soul. We say, in a common proverb, that, "One swallow does not make a summer." So the merely confessing Christ once with the mouth does not make the confession here intended. One tree is not a forest, and one avowal of Christ is not the confession of Christ unto salvation. There is something more intended than one act, however distinct, or however excellent it may be considered in itself.

I shall endeavor this morning, if God shall help me, to illustrate the meaning of confessing with the mouth unto salvation. And then I shall occupy a few minutes in enforcing this confession—urging those who love the Lord and have believed with their heart, to see to it that they confess with their mouths.

I. TO CONFESS CHRIST WITH THE MOUTH, I have said, embraces the whole lifework of the Christian. I think you will see this before I have done. Different cases demand of men different forms of confession. Some may have to confess the Lord in one way—some in another. Every Christian is called upon to confess Him with his mouth according to that way which his own state, abilities, and position in Providence may demand at his hands.

1. First, then, one of the simplest and earliest forms of confessing Christ with the mouth is to be found in uniting in acts of public worship. Early—as soon as the two distinct parties of the seed of the woman and of the serpent were discernible, we read, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." Those who feared not God went away to their various occupations—while the righteous—on the seventh day, gathered themselves together for prayer and praise and sacrifice. Anyone joining the ranks of the men who called upon the name of the Lord would at once be discovered, by that act, to be a servant of the Most High.

Throughout the whole stream of history we find the righteous identified by assembling themselves together, unitedly, to send up their prayers and thanksgivings to the Most High. Public worship became an acceptable form of confession when the seed of the serpent was able to persecute in the times when Jeroboam set up the calves at Bethel. When any Israelite wended his weary way to Jerusalem under fear of being persecuted by his king, then the act of standing with the multitude that kept holyday around the courts of the temple, was at once a distinct confession of his allegiance to Jehovah and his abhorrence of all idols.

In the Apostolic times those who believed were constant in the Apostle's doctrine, in breaking of bread, and in prayer. Where two or three were met together and especially where the greater numbers gathered to listen to the preaching of the Word, or for the purpose of breaking bread, the admission of any person to that assembly became a confession of his faith in the Lord Jesus, in whose name they were assembled.

In the early Christian days you may see a picture something like this, if I know how to paint it—there is a low arch—it is foul and dark, like the opening of a sewer. Over it grows the briar, and from its base springs up the nettle and the deadly nightshade. Yonder comes a maiden, and creeping low, she stoops beneath the arch. In the thick darkness she gropes her way for several yards. No one has noticed her entrance. Did you observe how she looked around, lest any sentinel might perceive her? She hears a voice in the distant passages. That voice guides her. She emerges into a vault. It is one of the catacombs beneath the city of Rome.

A torch renders darkness visible. No sooner does she approach the assembly than some watchful Brother observes her. He asks for the password. It is one of Caesar's household, a noble maiden who has heard the Gospel from her Jewish slave who waited upon her, and she has come to join in those secret rites which are performed by Believers in dens and caves of the earth. Her being there proves her a Christian. She would not have been there to worship God among those hunted ones, whom the upper earth and the pure air might not receive, if she had not loved the Lord.

She would not, thus, have degraded herself, to mingle with these pariahs of society—those only fit to be like beasts of prey for the bloodhounds of Nero—if she had not loved the Lord. Her coming there to join that simple hymn to one Christ, to bow her knee solemnly in that silent prayer to Jehovah and to His adorable Son—she had not been in that assembly—if she had not loved the Lord.

Very much so was it in later times. If a man went to hear Luther, you might have hope of him that he was a Christian. And especially in England, when the Lollard preached to the handful in some remote farmhouse, with a watcher outside, lest the monks should come. You might have been pretty clear that those who worshipped thus, when death was the penalty, were true disciples of the Lord. Again, in the days of the glorious Covenant, when Cargill and Campbell opened the Bible and read by the lightning's flash, while the dragoons of Claverhouse were scenting out their prey, you might be sure, whether it was yonder shepherd with his dog, or yonder heritor leaning upon his gun, or yonder ladies sitting on the grass and listening with tearful eye to the fiery words of the Covenanting leader—you might be sure that they were for the Lord of hosts, and for His Covenant, and for the Truth as it is in Jesus, or else they had not met there among the saints of the living God at peril of their lives.

Today it is so to a very few. There are some who, perhaps, have come into this house this morning whose husband's last words were, "If you go there, you will never enter my house again." Or, perhaps, it was the brother's word, as he cursed his sister for a love of the Truth of God. Or the father's deep, damning curse

upon his child for venturing to believe in Christ. Your being here today is a distinct confession with your mouth of the Lord Jesus. But it is not so with most of you. It is not so with nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand. Many come because it is the custom and more, I hope, because being Christians it is their delight always to come.

They do not recognize any distinct profession of religion in the mere act of being here. For we mingle together, saint and sinner, godly and ungodly. And if this were the only profession of religion that we have made, it would not fulfill the intention of my text. In persecuting times it would—in the dark, black, bloody days it would. But not today, for now it is little or no confession to most of us to sit comfortably in our seats and listen to the preacher, and then walk down the stone steps and go our way.

2. The confession of Christ which is here intended is still better to be carried out by a dutiful attention to those two ordinances which are intended by Christ to be the distinctive badge of Believers. Under the old Mosaic dispensation, ordinances were only for Israelites. Circumcision and the Passover were not for Philistines, nor for Egyptians—but for the seed of Abraham, and for the seed of Abraham and proselytes alone. It is even so under the Christian dispensation. We have no ordinances for aliens—we have no ordinances for strangers and foreigners. They are both intended for the commonwealth of Israel.

You will remember how very carefully the ancient Believers kept up these ordinances. You will find that the Ethiopian eunuch traveled all the way from the realm of Candace in order that he might be present at the temple worship—because that was the distinctive worship of the Jew, and of the proselyte to the Jewish faith. He would not be away. You remember how carefully and anxiously the heads of the Jewish householders saw to it that they, and all their children were present at the celebration of the Passover. Not one of them would neglect that which was distinctive of themselves as a separated people.

Now Baptism is the mark of distinction between the Church and the world. It very beautifully sets forth the death of the baptized person to the world. Professedly, he is no longer of the world. He is buried to it, and he rises again to a new life. No symbol could be more significant! In the immersion of Believers there seems to me to be a wondrous setting forth of the burial of the Believer to all the world in the burial of Christ Jesus. It is the crossing of the Rubicon. If Caesar crossed the Rubicon, there would never be peace between him and the senate again. He draws his sword and he throws away his scabbard. Such is the act of Baptism to the Believer. It is the crossing of the Rubicon—it is as much as to say, "I cannot come back again to you. I am dead to you. And to prove I am, I am absolutely buried to you. I have nothing more to do with the world. I am Christ's and Christ's forever."

Then, the Lord's Supper—how beautifully that ordinance sets forth the distinction of the Believer from the world in his life, and that by which his life is nourished. He eats the flesh of Christ, and drinks His blood. I marvel at some of you who love my Lord that you should keep away from His Table. It is His dying will—"This do you in remembrance of Me." It is so kind of Him to institute such an ordinance at all. To let us, who were as the dogs, sit at the children's table and eat bread such as angels never knew! I understand not, my dear Brother, my dear Sister, what sort of love yours can be if you hear Jesus say, "If you love Me, keep My commandments," and yet you neglect His ordinances.

You will say they are non-essential. And I will reply to you, most true, they are non-essential for your salvation, but they are not non-essential for your comfort. Nor are they non-essential for your obedience. It is for a child to do what his parent bids him. If, my loving Friend, my dear Redeemer had bid me do something hurtful to myself, I would do it out of love to Him! How much more, then, when He says to me,

"This do in remembrance of Me."

Both these ordinances bring a cross with them to some degree, especially the first. I was noting, when reading yesterday, the life of good Andrew Fuller. After he had been baptized, some of the young men in the village were custom to mock him, asking him how he liked being dipped—and such like questions which are common enough nowadays. I could but notice that the scoff of a hundred years ago is still the scoff of today. But, Brothers and Sisters, you are not afraid, I trust, to be pointed at as a baptized Believer? You believe that these are His commands. I charge you, therefore, before God, and the elect angels before whom you shall be judged at the last great day—if you, with your hearts have believed, with your mouths make the confession which these ordinances imply—and God shall surely give you a sweet reward therein.

3. In order to confess Christ with the mouth aright, there should be an association with the Lord's people. It was so in the olden times. Moses is an Israelite, but he may, if he wills, live in the court of Pharaoh, in the midst of luxury and ease. What is his choice? He goes forth to his Brothers and Sisters and he looks upon their burdens. He espouses their cause, counting the reproaches of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Moses, the reputed son of Pharaoh's daughter, associates with the poor despised slaves who make bricks for the king!

What a very touching picture we have of following the people of God, in the history of Ruth. One is charmed to hear that godly woman saying to her mother-in-law, "Where you go, I will go. And where you lodge, I will lodge: your people shall be my people and your God my God." There was a confession of the God of Israel, when Ruth clave unto Naomi, with all her heart. Now, we find in the early times of the Christian Church, that as soon as a man became a Christian, he went to his own company. He associated with the saints. When you asked, "Where are the Believers?" they were found together.

You may find other creatures wandering separately on the mountains, but sheep love to be in flocks. Paul was not content with being baptized, but after his Baptism he proceeded to join himself unto the Church. And we find that wherever there were people of God, they were always formed into a Church—whether it was at Philippi, or at Ephesus, or Pergamos, or Thyatira—or Rome itself, Paul everywhere formed Churches. And as he went from place to place, it was upon the Church that he looked as the pillar and ground of the Truth of God.

I very greatly delight in the preaching in the theatres. You know how heartily I rejoice in the preaching of Christ anywhere. But there is a lack in all this labor. The corn is sown, but there is nobody to see to it afterwards, nobody to gather it in. The way in which all this ought to be carried on is not by our Associations, but by the Church. The Church of God is the true mother of converts. It is from her womb that they must be born, and at her breast they must suck, and on her knees must they be pampered. Those who go about and speak lightly of Church fellowship, and would have all Christians maintain themselves in separateness from the Churches, do mischief and are unwittingly the agents of evil. For the Church is, under God, a great blessing to the world. And union with the Church is intended to be a method of confession which is not to be neglected.

Suppose for a moment, Brothers and Sisters, instead of the compact body of Believers of this one Church, we were broken into individual Christians and had no association with one another. I do not hesitate to say that some of the warmest-hearted among you would grow cold, for your associating with one another promotes your zeal and kindles your enthusiasm. The little ones among us would be subjected to I know

not what of dangerous heresy and of false doctrine. Even the strongest Brother or Sister here would feel it to be a most solemn bereavement if they had to lose association with the Brothers and Sisters in Christ who now comfort and strengthen them.

4. To some, confession with the mouth will involve the taking up of the cross in the family. I know of no form in which this confession is more delightful to God, and at the same time more arduous to men—to take up the cross in the family. It may be you are the first one converted in it, and you frequent the House of God while the rest take their pleasure on God's Day. You pray—the moment you kneel down in that chamber there is a ringing laugh within the walls. You talk of Christ and things Divine, and father and mother open their eyes and brothers and sisters all have some jest and jeer for you.

You ask me, what are you to do? Persevere! Stand fast! Be steadfast! For now it is that you are to make confession with your mouth unto salvation. I will not believe that your faith can save you unless you do now unhesitatingly, at all costs, though it were at the risk of losing father's love and mother's care, at once say, "I cannot help it—I am sorry to give you any vexation, but I cannot love father or mother more than Christ, least I should not be worthy of Him." You must be willing to give up all that is near and dear to you, whoever it may be—though loved as your own self and precious as your own life—you must give all up if these stand in the way of your following Christ Jesus the Lord.

"Ah, well," says one, "this is hard!" Yes, but remember for whom you do it! It is your Redeemer—who left His Father's court and became flesh—that He might be one with you. It is He who stretched His hands on the Cross and gave His side to the spear. Surely, all you can give up is but a trifle compared with what He gave up for you. Do it cheer-fully—do it at once!

Young Man, be not frightened and alarmed at the family trials you have to endure! Ask God to make you like one of the ironclad vessels, so that though they shoot their fiercest bolts, and hurl them with the most tremendous force, yet still they will only fly off from you, not hurting you because you are ironclad with invincible courage and determined faith. The kingdom of Heaven is to you like the old city which had been long besieged, and there was no hope of relieving the inhabitants of the town unless some ship should enter the harbor. But there was a great chain stretched across the harbor!

You remember how the captain, when the wind was fair and the tide was high, dashed against the boom, broke it and sailed into port. You must break the chain which threatens to keep you out of Heaven. Pray to God to give you much Divine Grace—that shall be like the flood tide. Much of the Holy Spirit—that shall be like a fair wind. And if you dash against the chain, it will break before your courage and determination. Family trials are hard to bear. A living cross is often more severe to carry than a dead one, but you must do it, for, "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

5. This confession will be very acceptable if it is made in the time of temptation. Young Joseph has his garment seized by his wanton mistress—his answer is, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" The woman might have answered, "God? What do I know of Him? I know Isis. I understand the golden calf, but I know nothing of Jehovah—who is He?" Here was a bold, distinct confession of Joseph's allegiance to Jehovah as a reason why he could not sin. The case of Nehemiah is equally to the point. When they invite him to a secret conference in the temple, he says, "Can such a man as I flee?" He avows his confidence in his God as a reason why he cannot for a moment act dishonorably.

Now Christian, here it is that you are to make confession with the mouth. Some dirty trick in business, which have become so common that nobody thinks any harm of it, comes in your way. Now, play the man

and say, "I would rather starve than do it. I cannot, and I will not live by robbery, even though it should be half legalized by society." Now is your opportunity, young Man. When the Sunday morning comes round and you are pulled by the sleeve by a dozen to go with them to waste its holy hours, you can say, "No," and give the reason, "I cannot do it. I am a Christian."

Or, it may be you have come up from the country and your friend—ah, your friend proposes to take you to a den of infamy, just to show you life. Tell him he does not understand how to cater to your appetite, for you are a Christian. For some ends I would prefer the declaration of one's faith in Jesus in the time of temptation to any other form of confession, since there surely can be no hypocrisy in it. Take care, Brothers and Sisters, that you never fail to acknowledge your Lord in the time of temptation.

"Ah," says one, "I know I never shall." Do not talk too positively. Peter denied his Lord before a silly maid—mind you do not fall in like manner. It is easy to say, "I am a good sailor," when you are on shore. You walk the quarter-deck all right enough when the ship is in dock. You do not know what the storm is, how the ship rocks and the waves wash her decks. You had better hold your boasting till you have been to sea. Boast not yourself of anything you will do, but rather say, "Hold You me up and I shall be safe."

6. Confession with the mouth should be carried out with double earnestness whenever we are called into trial for Christ's sake—when the avowing of Christ will bring loss upon us, or when the denial of His name may secure us temporary prosperity. You know in the olden time, how the three holy children refused to bow to the image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up. They could die, but they could not deny their God. They could burn, but they could not turn. And so, into the furnace they were cast, because they could not cast away their trust in God.

Look at Daniel, yonder, with his open window, seven times a day worshipping towards Jerusalem, as he had done aforetime. It is bravely done. It was a bold answer of Peter and John, when the Scribes and Pharisees bade them speak no more in that name, "Whether it is right to obey God rather than man, you judge." I have noticed that whenever persecution rages, and men are likely to lose anything for Christ, that the most timid persons who are sincere, generally come out at that time. There is Joseph of Arimathea. You do not hear of him while Jesus lives.

But when Jesus Christ's body is on the Cross, who shall go into the lion's den? Who shall see Pilate? Joseph of Ari-mathea begs the body of Jesus. He finds the sepulcher. And who shall help to wrap Him in spices? Why, Nicodemus, that came to Jesus Christ by night—another coward. They both advance and are cowardly no longer when it comes to the pinch. The stag takes to its heels and flies before the hounds, but when it comes to bay, fights with the bravery of desperation. So those who are timid, trembling Christians in ordinary times—when it comes to the point, come out—and are as bold as the most heroic of Believers.

I would give nothing for your religion if it does not come out in persecution. Some of you would hide your heads if it came to persecution, burning, and death. Erasmus used to say he was not made of the right stuff to be a martyr. So, I believe, the Papists picture Erasmus as hanging somewhere between Heaven and Hell. And the Protestants need not quarrel with the portrait. He had some sort of knowledge of the Truth of God, but he had not the courage to openly acknowledge it. And he stood shivering while his friend Luther went straight forward and smote the triple crown upon the Pope's brow.

Never let us be like Erasmus. "If the Lord is God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him." If the world and sin are worth living for, live for them with all your heart and soul and strength—but if God is God, do not

stand questioning and halting between two opinions. But decidedly, boldly, positively, say, "I am on the Lord's side." There is no time like the time of loss and trial for the making of this confession.

7. I believe, my Brothers and Sisters, that a Christian can hardly carry out this confession with his mouth, unless he goes a little out of his way at times to bear testimony. "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me," said Moses, when he came down from the mountain and broke the golden calf. "And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor."

Every now and then we shall not be able to confess Christ unless we do something which shall seem harsh and strange—but which must be done for God and for the Truth's sake. Surely, God's Elijahs cannot be silent! While thousands of Baal's priests are kindling their fires, and calling to Baal, they must stand forth. "Are not you servants of Baal, and I the servant of the living God?" We shall find it needful to intrude upon the dainties of etiquette and trample under our feet the formalities which dignified society would set up. And like the Prophet who came to Bethel, we shall have to cry against altars at which others pay their vows.

I have admired—and here I take up my cross with a good Brother—I have greatly admired a testimony lately borne in the assembly of the Free Kirk of Scotland, by my Brother, Candlish, against the inscription that has been placed upon the memorial erected in memory of the excellent Prince Albert. I have admired him for his boldness in stating what he thought and felt. I believe instead of a howl of indignation, he should have received a gift of honor. Little cares he whether he is praised or censured, but justice ought to be done to his courage and fidelity. He has pointed out the popish character of the inscription, of which I will venture to say that the Prince himself would abhor, could his peaceful spirit visit the memorial.

If I remember rightly, Mr. Baptist Noel told us that the Prince exclaimed on his dying bed—

"Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Your Cross I cling."

He died a Christian, humbly clinging to the Cross of Jesus. Why is his monument to be dishonored by an inscription fitted for a popish saint, but not for one who loved the Lord Jesus Christ? There is no disloyalty in our expressing our opinion frankly—nor do we intend to intrude upon the liberty of others. A large license should be given to affection, and sorrow should have its own choice of words. But it is a mistake, if not a sin, to obtrude a papist eulogy where a Christian epitaph had been far more in keeping.

I take up my cross with Candlish. And I were not true to God if I did not, for I believe that he who confesses Christ sometimes against the popular run and the popular current, is the only man who can expect to receive a reward from his Master for having acted faithfully in all things. Sometimes you will have to do this, but not always—perhaps not often. Go not out of your way to testify, but when the burden of the Lord is upon you, testify—and let none make you afraid.

8. Again, to confess Christ with the mouth is not possible unless we are willing to use our position as a method of confession. Joshua is the head of a household. He uses that position—"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." I will not believe in your faith if you do not see to it that in your household God is recognized. Let the family altar be reared. Let the sacrifice smoke upon it. If it cannot be twice, let it be once in the day. But see to it that you pay your vows unto the Most High in that position, or else you have not made a confession unto salvation.

Or it may be you have influence where you can help Christ's Church. Mind that you do it. Esther is the queen of Ahasuerus. If she refuses to declare herself a Jewess—if she does not make the quarrel of Israel against Haman, her own quarrel—then she shall be safe. She has come to the kingdom for such a time as this. Some of you are large employers, or you may happen to be members of Parliament, or you are in spheres where you have power very much to influence the minds of other men. See that you do it for God. For all that influence is so much money given to you to put out to interest for your Lord and Master. And if you bury it in a napkin, or only use it for yourself, in the last great day he will say to you, "You wicked and slothful servant, you shall be cast away to the tormentors."

9. Once more. There are some men who never will confess the Lord Jesus with their mouths as they ought to do unless they become preachers. David said he had preached the Word before the great congregation. And he makes it his boast that he had not shunned to declare it before kings. Now there are some of you who have ability to speak, but you never do. All the whole length of London streets await you as a pulpit. The whole population of London is ready to be your audience. Why do you not begin to speak? You can talk on politics. The other evening, at the literary institution, I understand you read a capital paper upon some astronomical subject.

If you love the Lord Jesus, are you going to give all your attention to these inferior themes? No, at least sometimes give it to Him who bought you with His blood. "You are not your own, for you are bought with a price." Mind, then, that your speech be as much Christ's as any other thing which you possess. Speak for your Lord and Master. You tell me you are nervous. Never mind your nervousness. Try once. If you break down half a dozen times, try again. You shall find your talents increase. It is wonderful how those breakdowns do more good than our keeping on. Just deliver your soul of what is in it. Get your heart red hot, and then like some volcano that is heaving in its inner heart, let the hot lava of your speech run streaming down.

You need not care for the graces of oratory, nor for the refinements of eloquence, but speak what you know. Show them your Savior's wounds—bid His sorrow speak to them—and it shall be marvelous how your stammering tongue shall be all the better an instrument because it does stammer! For God "has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are."

You see, Brothers and Sisters, this confession of Christ with the mouth is a lifework. The Christian man is to be something like a physician. You know we call a physician a professional man. Well, how does he profess? There is a large brass plate on his door, and a big bell, and everybody knows what the brass plate and the bell mean. That is part of his profession. What else? How does he profess to be a physician? He goes into company and his dress is like anybody else's. You do not see a box of lancets hanging at his side. You do not observe that he is dressed in any peculiar costume. He is a physician and he is always a physician, but his profession is carried on by his practice.

This is how a Christian's profession is to be carried on—by his practice. The man is a physician, professionally, because he really does heal people and write prescriptions, and attend to their wants. I am to be a Christian in my actions, my deeds, my thoughts, my words. Therefore, if anybody wants a Christian, I should be known by my words and my acts.

When we used to go to school we would draw houses, and horses, and trees on our slates, and we remember how we used to write "house" under the house, and "horse" under the horse, for some persons might have thought the horse was a house. So there are some people who need to wear a label round their necks to show that they are Christians at all, or else we might mistake them for sinners, their actions are so alike.

Avoid that. Let your profession be manifest by your practice. Be so clearly a piece of Divine painting that the moment a man puts his eye upon you, he says, "Yes, that is the work of God. That is a Christian, the noble work of God."

II. I have only one or two minutes to give a few words of exhortation. Dear Friends, see that you confess Christ with your mouth. Do not make excuses, for NO EXCUSE YOU CAN MAKE WILL BE VALID. You will lose your business, you say! Lose it and gain your soul. You will be unfashionable! What is it to be fashionable? You will be despised by those who love you! Do you love husband or wife more than Christ? If so, you are not worthy of Him. But you are so timid! Mind you are not so timid as to be lost at last, for the fearful and unbelieving shall have their portion in the lake that burns—not those who fear and sometimes doubt their interest in Christ—but those who are afraid to confess Christ before men.

You know that in the silence of the sick or dying hour, no excuse, however specious it may appear today, will answer your conscience. And if it will not answer your conscience, depend upon it, it will not satisfy God. In the next place, remember how dishonorable it is in you to say you believe with the heart and yet not to make confession. You are like a rat behind the paneling, coming out just now and then when nobody is looking, and then running behind again.

"What a degrading metaphor," you say. I meant to degrade you by it, so as to drive you out of your cowardice. What? Is Christ to be treated like this, as if the name of Christ were a thing to be avowed in skulking holes and corners? No, in the face of the sun let it be said, "I love Jesus, who gave Himself for me." It is not a thing to be said alone, nor to be hidden from the ears of men. He died in the face of the sun, with mockers round about Him. And with mockers round about us let us declare our faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord!

How honorable, on the other hand, will the confession be to you. If I had to join an army and I found on the muster roll a list of ragamuffins and the scrapings of the street, I do not think I should like to be a soldier. But if, on the other hand, I found my colonel a great conqueror, and that I had for compeers and comrades men who had some glorious names upon their banners, I should feel honored by being allowed to be a drummer boy in such a regiment. So when I read the list and find Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Daniel, Isaiah—Jesus Christ Himself—the Apostles, Luther, Calvin and men whose names have become household words in every Christian family, I count it an honor if my name shall be found written with theirs, as the most humble and feeblest soldier in the whole army.

It is an honorable thing. Therefore, cast in your lot with us and be prepared to be despised as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. I urge this upon you, because it will make you useful. What is the good of a secret Christian? He is a candle under a bushel. He is a light shut up in a dark lantern. Let your light shine. What is the good of a secret Christian? He is salt without savor. And what is he fit for but to be trampled under foot of men? Come, let the savor of your salt be felt throughout the world. Grace is sufficient. That is another argument for you. You think you will have fresh responsibilities and dangers if you make a confession. Grace is sufficient.

If Divine Grace puts you upon a pinnacle of the temple, depend upon it, Divine Grace will keep you there. If you get off the pinnacle and come down on the hard ground, you will be unsafe there. But if God puts you on the pinnacle, let all the devils in Hell come to push you down, you shall stand fast. Be not disobedient and choose your own way—take God's way and you are safe in it.

Lastly, the reward is splendid. "He that confesses Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in Heaven." There was a Prince of right royal blood who once upon a time left his Father's palace and journeyed into a distant part of the king's dominions where he was little known and cared for. He was a true Prince, and he had about his face those princely marks—that strange divinity which does hedge a king, that might have made the onlooker know that he was right royal. But when he came into the place, the people said, "This is the heir to the throne. Let us insult him, let us hoot him!"

Others said he was no heir at all. And they agreed to set him in the pillory. As he stood there, every man did pelt him with all kinds of filth and used all manner of hard words towards him. And they said, "Who dares acknowledge him for a Prince? Who dares stand by him?" There stood up one from the crowd and said, "I dare!" They set him up in the pillory side by side with the Prince. And when they threw their filth on the Prince, it fell on him. And when they spoke hard words of the Prince they spoke hard words of him. He stood there, smiling and received it all.

Now and then a tear stole down his cheek. But that was for them, that they should thus ill-treat their sovereign. Years went by. The king came into those dominions and subdued them. And there came a day of triumph over the conquered city—streamers hung from every window and the streets were strewn with roses. There came the king's troops dressed in burnished armor of gold, with plumes upon their glittering helmets. The music rang right sweetly, for all the trumpets of glory sounded. It was from Heaven they had come!

The Prince rode through the streets in his glorious chariot. And when he came to the gates of the city, there were the traitors all bound in chains. They stood before him trembling. He singled out from among the crowd one man, only, who stood free and unfettered, and he said to the traitors, "Know you this man? He stood with me in that day when you treated me with scorn and indignation. He shall stand with me in the day of my glory. Come up here!" said he. And amidst the sounding of trumpets and the voice of acclamation, the poor, despised and rejected citizen of that rebellious city rode through the streets in triumph, side by side with his King, who clothed him in purple and set a crown of pure gold upon his head.

There is the parable! By the Grace of God, live it out! Amen.

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