

Faith First, Confession Following

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that genuine faith in Christ must precede and compel a public confession, together resulting in salvation.

Scripture: Romans 10:10, Numbers 5:19, John 2:5, Daniel 9:24, 1 Timothy 1:13-16, Romans 8:10, Matthew 28:19, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Faith and Confession", "Salvation", "Christian Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, C.H. Spurgeon emphasizes the vital order and connection between faith and confession, teaching that true belief in Jesus Christ must be openly professed to lead to salvation. He exhorts believers to confess Christ boldly and consistently, both in personal testimony and through the ordinances of baptism and communion. Spurgeon challenges Christians to embrace confession as a continual duty and a powerful witness to the world, rooted firmly in Scripture and obedience to Christ's commands.

Transcript

"For with the heart, man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:10.

[For two other sermons on this text, see Numbers 519 and 520, Volume 9—BELIEVING WITH THE HEART and CONFESSION WITH THE MOUTH]

Having noted the order of faith and its confession, next, note the connection between them. Confessing with the mouth is to follow believing with the heart just as effect follows causes. We are to confess with the mouth because we believe with the heart. The heart's belief is to be so potent and energetic a thing that it constrains us to confess openly what we have received inwardly—no confession is worth anything unless it is the outcome of the Grace by which we have received the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior!

There is a due order for faith and confession—and there is a clear connection between faith and confession.

Notice, also, the result of the two put together—"With the heart, man believes unto righteousness, and with the

mouth, confession is made unto salvation." The result of faith and confession is salvation. I do not doubt that a man who

truly believes in Jesus is saved even before he makes a confession of his faith, but it is very remarkable that the blessing of

salvation is constantly connected with these two things rather than with either one of them alone—and we must not put

asunder what God has joined together. The same Truth of God is taught in the memorable sentence which I quoted to

you just now—"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." There is no saving efficacy in Baptism, yet belief and

Baptism are joined together by our Lord Jesus Christ and again I say, "What, therefore, God has joined together, let not

man put asunder." I would not like to attend to one duty and neglect another when I found my Master laying both upon

me. The path of obedience is always the path of happiness and if any God-given command should ever seem to your

imperfect apprehension to be less important than another, remember the wise words of the mother of Jesus to the servants

at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, "Whatever HE says unto you, do it"—and do it conscientiously, gladly, promptly,

because He commanded it, even though you cannot see any other reason for doing it. [For two other sermons upon this subject, see Number 2275, Volume 38—BLIEF, BAPTISM, BLESSING—and Number 2339, Volume 39—BAPTISM ESSENTIAL TO OBEDIENCE]

We have, on this occasion, to consider the lesser duty of the two, which is, nevertheless, most certainly enjoined upon all Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. In talking of it, I still have to speak of four things. First, what it is that we are to confess? Secondly, when are we to confess it? Thirdly, why we should confess it? And, fourthly, how and in what spirit should we confess it?

I. First, then, as BELIEVERS IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHAT IS IT THAT WE ARE TO CONFESS?

It is clear, from the text, that we are to confess with the mouth that which we believe with the heart. The same things which, through our faith in them, are the basis of our salvation, become the subject of our confession before God. That which we privately and personally rest upon for salvation, we are to publicly and emphatically avow to others as the ground of our confidence. And you know whom that is, Beloved. It is neither more nor less than the Person, work, Character and offices of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We build for eternity upon Him. He is the foundation and the chief cornerstone of the invisible, yet most substantial structure upon which all our confidence rests! And if any Believer should ask, "What am I to confess?" the answer is plain enough—confess JESUS CHRIST!

First, we are to confess that we believe Him to be the appointed Savior of sinners—that we look upon Him as being the long-promised Seed of the woman who came into this world to bruise the old serpent's head

and to recover His chosen people from among the terrible ruins of the Fall. We believe Him to be the Son of God, equal with the Father and the ever-blessed Spirit. And we accept Him and confess Him as our Savior, in whom alone we have confidence, upon whose unique Sacrifice we rely for pardon of all our sins and upon whose constant intercession we depend for our preservation unto the end. We confess Christ before men as King of kings and Lord of lords, as "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession," the Messiah by whom alone can be fulfilled Gabriel's prophecy to Daniel, "to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." We must confess Christ in all His offices and Characters—and if we lay stress upon any part of His life, or any attribute of His Character, it must be upon that which is most attacked in the age in which we live. The great point of controversy in Paul's day was the Resurrection of Jesus and, therefore, wherever he went, he preached the Resurrection. He knew that this Truth of God would excite the ridicule of the philosopher and bring down upon him the fierce opposition of the Jews, but, nevertheless, this was always a prominent point in his preaching and writing, "Christ is risen from the dead."

Sometimes it has been the duty of Christians to make most prominent the Deity of Christ because that Truth has been the one most attacked just then. Some years ago, many insults were cast upon the Godhead of our Lord and then every genuine Christian was bound to expound and defend that master Doctrine that Jesus Christ "is over all, God blessed forever." Whatever may be the point in the Character of our Lord which is most debated and controverted, it is the duty of His true disciples to bear witness upon that point with special distinctness and frequency. To confess Christ is to say of Him, "I have received Him into my soul as my Savior and He is my sole hope for time and for eternity. I honor Him as the Son of God and I submit to His Laws as those of the great King who is worthy to rule as He pleases. Let others set up what lords they will and be governed by what laws they choose, as for me, the crucified Man of Nazareth—who is none other than the ever-blessed Son of God, co-equal with the Father and the Spirit—shall have the absolute control of all my powers and faculties. This, I take it, is the way in which "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

But, in confessing Christ, we must take care that we confess all His words as well as Himself. You recollect that solemn declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Whoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him, also, shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in the Glory of His Father with the holy angels." A Scriptural confession of Christ involves our profession of faith in that form of Doctrine which is revealed in the Divinely-Inspired Scriptures, our union with that body of Believers who most clearly comply with the requirements of our Master's Words, our willing subjection to whatever we perceive to be according to the mind and will of Christ. And we are not altogether faithful to our conscience unless, in every point, as far as we receive the Light of God, when we know our Master's will, we do it! Oh, that all Christians would look upon this kind of confession as being one of the most important parts of the Christian's business here below! Instead of that, it seems to be the view of some that you are to keep a great many Truths in the background just because they happen to be inconvenient either to yourselves or to other people! But, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, the true ideal of a New Testament Christian Church is that of a company of Believers witnessing to the whole of Christ's Truth, counting every fragment of the Word to be so precious that if the entire Christian community should go to martyrdom in defense of just one Truth of God, that priceless Truth of Revelation would be saved at a cheap rate even by so great a sacrifice! To stand firmly by God's Word in everything, to conform to our Master's will even to the jots and tittles, to savor the things that are of God and not those that are of men—this it is what every Christian should seek to do by the aid of the ever-blessed Spirit!

Further, dear Friends, it is the duty of each Christian to confess his clear faith in Christ. You should avow before your fellow men that you have believed in Jesus. I think the Scriptures teach us that this ought to be done early in our Christian career. We should not live as secret Christians, for years, as some do, as though they were ashamed of Jesus and saying nothing to show that they have believed in Him. Confess that unless you are dreadfully deceived, you are saved by

Christ, and are resting in Him! Then confess what Christ has done for you and do not be ashamed to confess the details of your case. Paul told Timothy that "before he was a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious." But he adds, "However, for this cause I attained mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." Do not be ashamed to confess that there is a change in you, that you are not now what you once were! Tell the story of your spiritual experience. Is it not written, concerning God's deliverance of His people, "It shall be to the Lord for a name?" Do not rob God of the great name of Deliverer, to which He is so fully entitled! It is due to a physician, when he has been the means of curing some extraordinary disease, that you should tell of what he has done, so, tell to others what the Great Physician has done for you!

If you have been, spiritually, raised from the dead by the Lord Jesus Christ, never cease to publish abroad what He has done for you! And as you grow older and your experience increases, confess with your mouth the deeper Truths of God that have been revealed to you. Tell to the young people around you what the Lord did for you in your times of trouble. Speak well of your Master—imitate the holy resolution of David—"I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad." And when the time comes for you to die, mind that you bear a closing testimony to Christ, then, if it is possible. Let those around your bed hear you tell, in your last moments, how real and true you find Christ to be to you when all else in the world seems like a dream and your life melts away like a shadow.

This appears to me to be an accurate, though brief, summary of a Christian's confession of faith—what Christ is in himself and what Christ has been to him and been for him. You can yourselves supply any deficiency that there may be in my summary, for the flight of time prevents me from dealing further with this part of the subject.

II. Now, secondly, let us enquire WHEN SHOULD ONE WHO BELIEVES WITH THE HEART, MAKE CONFESSION WITH THE MOUTH?

Should he not make it as soon as he is converted? Is it not the most fitting time for making his first confession when he comes forward to unite himself with a Christian Church? Many churches, nowadays, have given up the old-fashioned custom which once prevailed in Baptist churches, of candidates coming before the Church and making a public avowal of their faith before their fellow Believers and, through the abandonment of that Scriptural method, they have bred a race of cowardly good-for-nothings who hardly dare to say that their souls are their own, who never know what their religious convictions are, but are turned this way and that with every wind that blows, like so many weather-cocks! But you, my Brothers and Sisters, though some of you once thought it a great ordeal and trial, have all testified before the Church, "Yes, we do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." Some of you said it with very trembling lips, but still, you all said, personally and individually, as your turn came, "Yes, we are on the Lord's side." It seems to me that this is an Apostolic custom which ought never to be given up and I scarcely count that to be a

church which receives its members without any testimony of their faith being verbally given! We know that Paul, himself, when he went up to Jerusalem, "essayed to join himself to the disciples," but they were afraid to receive him until they had heard how he had been converted to God, "and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." Then they gladly received him, "and he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem." Why is it that good Christian people are so frightened over the little matter of saying to their fellow Christians, "We believe in Jesus," utterly amazes me! If you have been, as Jeremiah says, wearied by running with the footmen, how can you contend with horses? And if, in these little billows of trouble through making your open avowal of faith to your own Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you get so frightened, what will you do in the dwellings of Jordan? You are afraid of going to see your minister about joining the church, are you? Yet you have to meet the devil, foot to foot, as Bunyan's Christian had to meet Apollyon! Are you afraid of meeting a few of your fellow Christians? Why, you have to meet DEATH! You have to face a scorning, scoffing, frowning, jeering, persecuting world! If you are afraid of a company of Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who are only too glad to hear you say that you are on the Lord's side if it is really true, and who will cheer and comfort, and help you as far they possibly can—if you are afraid of us, surely you cannot have the courage which ought to be the possession of all good soldiers of Jesus Christ!

Then, next, the two ordinances of the Christian religion are, both of them, confessions of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It seems to me that the Baptism of Believers is a most impressive and instructive mode of confessing with the mouth what we have believed with the heart. Coming to the open pool, the Believer says to you who look on, "I believe that Jesus Christ died and was buried, and rose again on my behalf, in testimony to which I, also, am about to be buried in this liquid and out of which I shall rise, as He rose from the grave. I believe that this flesh of mine is past improvement and must die—I look for no perfection in my body, for I know that the perfection I am to receive is spiritual. As Paul

wrote to the Romans, "If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." And I give up this body of mine to be buried—the body of my flesh, these old corruptions, to be buried once and for all. I openly confess, this day, that I am dead to the world, that my life is hid with Christ in God, and that the life which I henceforth live shall be a resurrection-life, a life in the power of the Holy Spirit who has quickened me, and raised me up from among the dead to live with Jesus Christ in newness of life!" I cannot conceive a more impressive and instructive form of confession with the mouth than that which our Master Himself has enjoined upon us, not only by precept, but also by example when He told John to baptize Him in the river Jordan, and said to him, "Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness."

And then, when we gather around the Table of Communion in obedience to our Master's command, "This do in remembrance of Me," we, "do show the Lord's death till He comes." And there, in the breaking and eating of the bread, and the pouring out and drinking of the wine, we make another confession with the mouth that we have trusted in Jesus as our Savior, that He is "the Living Bread which came down from Heaven," upon which we live and, "the wine on the lees, well refined," which is the choicest cordial our quickened spirits can enjoy.

So you see that both the ordinances are God's own methods by which we are to confess our confidence in His Son, Jesus Christ.

More than this, every Christian is bound to acknowledge his faith in Christ at all times when it is possible. We are not merely Christians on some special occasions, we are always Christians and Christians forever

if we are Christians at all! We are not only Believers in Jesus when we meet each other at the Communion Table, or at a Prayer Meeting, but we are Believers in Jesus out of doors, at our work, in our business, or our daily occupation, whatever it may be. I utterly abhor that so-called, "piety," which belongs only to places and to dates! Your "holy" places, and your "holy" dates, and your "holy" water, and so on are all alike anti-Christian and Popish! To the Christian, every day is alike holy, every place alike holy and everything alike holy! He is a sanctified man and all things that are around him are sanctified to God's service and to his fellow creatures' good and, to that end, he confesses Christ with his mouth at all times.

Still, there are certain special occasions when we should do this. For instance, it is our duty to confess Christ with the mouth when enquirers ask us for information about Him. There are many persons in the world with a sufficiently candid spirit to want to know what Christianity really is. So, as the Apostle Peter says, "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Do not let such enquirers go away unsatisfied, even though it may be a very long and difficult matter to satisfy their enquiries.

Mind, also, that you are always ready to make confession of your faith to objectors, even though they should only ask questions and raise objections just for the sake of opposition. When a controversy is started and someone else speaks on the wrong side, do not hesitate to put in a word for that which is right and true! I have heard of some people who are of so gentle a spirit that if they hear others engaged in controversy, they always walk away. Well, have you ever heard of the soldier who was so gentle-spirited that whenever there was any fighting to be done, he always hid away in a corner, or some other safe place? That was not very creditable on his part and when he was discovered, he was shot! And that mode of skulking, which some people adopt whenever a religious controversy is on, is about as honorable to them! If you can say a word that will really help a good cause, do not keep it back, for, sometimes, even the simplest observation may come in just at the right time and may overthrow the adversary of the Truth of God. So, bear your personal testimony for the Truth in times of controversy. And take care that you always confess Christ when you are likely to be ridiculed for doing so. This, indeed, will be a test of your sincerity! To confess Christ in summer weather when religion, as it were, walks in silver slippers, is what a hypocrite might do—but to take your place beside Christ when He stands in the pillory and every man's hands are full of mud and filth to throw at Him—this is what only a genuine Christian can do! Confess Christ when His followers are in rags! Acknowledge Him when His disciples are oppressed and persecuted! Remember what Paul mentions to the praise of Onesiphorus—"he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains." Do not any of you Christians be ashamed of Christ's chains, but count it your highest honor and glory, as Paul says, to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," "for His body's sake, which is the Church."

Let me, having thus given you sufficient opportunity for making your confession of faith, urge upon those present who have believed in Jesus, but have never yet confessed their faith, the duty of doing so at once! Be no longer backward, but say, "I, also, am on the Lord's side." I pray you, if you have never done so, take the first opportunity you have of doing it and, in some way, but especially in your Lord and Master's own way, come forward and say, "He is my Savior, my King, my All-in-All, and I hereby avow Him in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation." III. Now, thirdly, let us ask, WHY SHOULD WE CONFESS OUR FAITH IN CHRIST?

I shall not spend many minutes on this point, for it seems to me that every true Christian's heart can supply him with many reasons for acting thus. To confess God in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, is a part of true religious homage which is naturally due to the Most High. Our prayers and praises are rightly

due to the great Being who created us and who still preserves and provides for us—and our confession of Christ, if we have truly believed in Him, is due to the One who has redeemed us from destruction with His own most-precious blood!

We should confess Christ with the mouth because He claims this from us. I repeat the solemn words I quoted to you a little while ago—"Whoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of Me and of My Words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him, also, shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in the Glory of His Father with the holy angels." Tremble, lest you should incur the doom of those who are ashamed of Christ! There is another terrible passage in the 21st Chapter of the Revelation and the 8th verse—"But, the fearful, and unbelieving...shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." "The fearful"—that is, those who are afraid to confess Christ—not those who are fearful concerning their own salvation! Not the Little-Faiths and the Much-Afraid—but those cowards who are afraid to suffer for Christ's sake and who, therefore, take the side of the world for the sake of their present ease and comfort—these are they who shall be shut out of Heaven and have their everlasting portion with idolaters and liars in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone! I implore you to tremble lest that should be your lot.

We should openly acknowledge Jesus Christ, my Brothers and Sisters, if only for our own sakes, for really, it does a Christian great good to say openly, "I love the Lord." It gives happiness, comfort, satisfaction, rest of heart and lasting joy to confess Christ before men! I have not the time to tell you of all the blessings that I personally received through publicly acknowledging that Christ was my Savior. One thing I may say, however, I believe that up to that time I was one of the most timid persons in the world! I never spoke to anybody and never ventured to give an opinion upon anything without tears coming into my eyes. But, from that happy day when I walked into the water at Isleham Ferry to be baptized into the name of Christ, I have never been afraid of any man in the world, nor of the devil, either, while engaged in the pursuit of the things of God! My Baptism was a sort of crossing of the Rubicon for me. I had burnt my boats, drawn my sword and thrown away the scabbard—so there was no possibility of going back—and I never wished to do so. And I believe that others who are always timorous, trembling and afraid, would derive perpetual benefit from once and for all boldly and openly acknowledging themselves to be on the Lord's side!

And, Brothers and Sisters, we ought also to do this for the sake of others. Who knows what good you may do in your family by confessing Christ with the mouth if you have believed on Him with your heart? There is another poor trembler in your home—if you come out for Christ, that other one will soon come out, too. Frequently, it is my happy lot to see a daughter come to join the Church and when I ask her if her parents are godly people, she says, "Oh, yes, I hope so, Sir!" "Do they attend the Tabernacle?" "Oh yes, Sir!" "Then how is it that they have not joined us?" "Well, Sir, I think it is because they are so timid." And then, often, in about a month afterwards, the father and mother both come—they cannot let their daughter be in the Church without them, so they also come and openly acknowledge their faith in Christ. It is not the right order, you know, for the child to come first, but it is often so—and when one comes, others soon follow. I have known many a time, the youngsters of the family to be the boldest in acknowledging Christ as their Lord and Master and then, when they have broken the ice, the other Believers in the household have followed them and made the heroic plunge. Confess Christ, therefore, because of the good you may do to others by so doing!

Further, by giving such public testimony to your faith—that is, if you live up to it—you help to let the world know that the old faith has not died out. And though they may hate you for doing it, you will have borne your personal witness that there is a God, that there is a Savior and the wicked world will not be able to

sleep so soundly as it did before! Your confession will touch its guilty conscience and cause it to have disquieting dreams. It may be that you will help to awaken it and so be the means of bringing some out of it whom Christ has bought with His precious blood who will also boldly come out on the Lord's side!

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, if you will look through the history of the Church of Christ, you will find abundant reasons why every Christian should publicly acknowledge his Master. Look at those days of diabolical persecution under Diocletian and the other Roman emperors. Look all down the blood-red path of the noble army of martyrs. Where would the confessors of Christ have been if all Christians had left the knowledge of their faith to themselves? Where would the Church of Christ, itself, have been if every Believer had done as some do now—namely choke the good Seed within their own hearts by never giving expression to the faith that is in them? Why, when the fires

of persecution were the hottest, Christians were the bravest—and multitudes of men and boys, matrons and maidens, were not ashamed to come to the Roman and other tribunals and say, "We are followers of Christ, we acknowledge the Man of Nazareth as our Lord and Savior." They did not hide themselves away—many of them even seemed to court grim Death, though he came dressed in his most terrifying garb! Torture, flaying alive, breaking on the wheel, dragging at the heels of wild horses, rotting in foul dungeons, burning at the stake—none of these things could quench their courage! They knew whom they had believed and were persuaded that He was able to keep that which they had committed unto Him and, therefore, they marched bravely to prison and to death! What then? Shall others fight to win the prize and shall you, as a coward, abide by the stuff? God forbid! Instead thereof, the Lord help you to confess Christ in the day of His rejection that you may be honored with Him in the day of His exaltation! God help you to take His part in the midst of the sinners of the world, that you may be with Him when the acclamations of cherubim and seraphim, and the innumerable host redeemed by His blood shall make all Heaven ring and ring again with the music of His matchless name!

IV. And now, lastly, IN WHAT SPIRIT SHOULD WE CONFESS CHRIST?

We should confess Christ, first, with due self-examination. As it is with the Lord's Supper, so it is with this important matter of confessing Christ with the mouth. "Let a man examine himself," says the Apostle, and so say we, for, remember that confession with the mouth will be very dangerous unless you are sure that you have believed in Christ with your heart. I am greatly afraid for those of you who are not converted, but who have united yourselves with some Christian Church. After the exercise of the best judgment on the part of Church officers, such a calamity will occasionally occur, but if, my Friends, this is your case, you are in a most perilous position! You are now not very likely to be converted, for the preacher's message to the sinner will pass on to somebody else when it should be received by you. The fact of your being in the Church may be very much to your spiritual injury. Therefore do not confess with the mouth what you have not believed with the heart!

But, when you have believed with the heart, take care that you promptly and quickly confess Christ with the mouth. Do not need to be pressed to do it. Do not need that mother, or father, or friends should urge you to do it. Christ did not need any pressing to give Himself to die for you, so you should not need any pressing to live for Him. The best wine flows most freely from the grape and the sweetest honey is that which drops freely from the comb. Let your soul freely drop with love to Christ like the droppings of the honeycomb. "Freely we have received, freely give" to Him who freely gave His all for you.

Take care, too, that you also came forward very boldly. Do not be ashamed to confess Christ with the mouth in His own appointed way. What you are about to do has no shame connected with it. If you sincerely believe in Jesus, you have no more need to blush at being baptized than a king has when he comes forward to be crowned, or a knight when he kneels to receive the accolades from his sovereign. There is no sin in being a disciple of the Son of God and no shame in confessing that you are His!—

"Ashamed of Jesus? That dear Friend On whom my hopes of Heaven depend? No, when I blush, to this my shame, That I not more revere His name."

Further, confess Christ with the mouth very plainly. Do not acknowledge Him in a mystical sort of way which nobody can understand, but bear your testimony by plain words and by still plainer actions. Remember that "actions speak louder than words" and, therefore, make your confession most of all by the consistent Christian character of your daily life. "Let your conversation be as it becomes the Gospel of Christ."

Then, constantly make your confession with the mouth. Do not retract at home what you say abroad and, on the other hand, do not disown abroad what you acknowledge to be true at home! Do not be one thing in the Church and another thing in the world. Remember that you are always a Christian if you are ever a Christian! Stand fast in the faith, therefore, at all times. Nail your colors to the mast if you have entered the service of the Lord High Admiral of the Galilean Lake!

Above all things, confess the Lord Jesus Christ sincerely. Let there be no hypocrisy about your confession in any way. Do not repeat some other Christian's experience which is not your own. Do not borrow your confession of faith from the biography of some eminent Christian. Let your own experience be what you profess. Say, with the Apostle John, "that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

Also, make your confession modestly—not as though you had anything to boast of in being a Christian—not as though your Christianity was the result of any good thing in you. Take care to ascribe it all to Sovereign Grace. Do not blush at being a Christian, but, at the same time, do not boast about it. As Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Rejoice in Christ Jesus," but, "have no confidence in the flesh."

Further, make your confession of Christ wisely—not doing it so as to unnecessarily irritate others—being willing to suffer for Christ if necessary, but not making a martyr of yourself when there is no occasion for doing so. Boldly speak out for Christ whenever you can, but always blend the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove.

Finally, confess Christ out of love to Him because you cannot help doing so. Let holy zeal blaze and burn within you till the sparks fly out of your soul in the form of a burning confession of Christ. Let your feet be dipped in the holy oil of complete consecration to Christ, that you may leave a sacred unction behind you wherever you walk. That will be the best confession of your faith that you can make. Still, do not dissociate the word of confession from the action, for it is to be confession with the mouth. Do say and say it unmistakably, "I am a Christian." If Christians have any other nickname beside that of Christians—for so it was given to them at the first—do not be ashamed of that nickname. Do not be ashamed of the denomination to which you belong, even though some may denounce you as a sectarian. Remember that the genuine Christian is and must be a sectarian—that is to say, he is one who firmly holds the whole Truth of God which he has learned from the Scriptures through the teaching of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, he is what the world calls "a sectarian." But as for latitudinarianism, which believes nothing and counts no truth to be worth anything—the modern Diana of the Ephesians—I pray you, make no shrines

for that hideous idol and pay no reverence to it, but, like honest men and women, read your Bibles, find out what is the revealed Word of God and stand to it at all costs. If it brings an ugly name upon you and you are called a sectarian, be willing to bear that name for Christ's sake! Only take care that in bearing it you have not the horrible spirit of some sectarians who denounce all others because they do not see eye to eye with them—and who have no fellowship with them because they cannot say, "Shibboleth," exactly as the sectarians say it. Love the whole family of God but do not be ashamed of those distinctive Truths of God which give you a name which makes you a separatist from the ungodly and from those who do not follow the whole counsel of God. Stand out boldly for Christ and for His Truth, so that when He comes again, He may say to you, "Well done, you good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter you into the joy of your Lord."

You who have not yet believed on Jesus with the heart, must make no confession with the mouth. But I pray that you may be, even now, led to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The way of salvation is simply this—Trust Jesus Christ—that is believing with the heart. Depend upon His merits, rely upon His all-sufficient atoning Sacrifice, rest in His perfect righteousness. If you do that, you are saved! And then, being saved, come forward and openly acknowledge your faith and God bless you in so doing, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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