

Holding Fast Our Profession

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon exhorts believers to steadfastly hold fast to their profession of faith and hope in Christ, grounded in the unchanging faithfulness of God's promises.

Scripture: Hebrews 10:23, Hebrews 8:10, John 6:68, John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:8, 1 Corinthians 15:52, Psalm 16:11, Hebrews 6:19

Topics: "Faith", "Hope", "Perseverance"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon passionately urges believers to steadfastly hold fast to their profession of faith and hope in Jesus Christ. Drawing from Hebrews 10:23, he emphasizes the preciousness of faith, the blessed hope of Christ's return, and the importance of public confession through baptism and communion. Spurgeon reminds his listeners that God's faithfulness is the sure foundation that enables Christians to persevere without wavering in a changing world.

Transcript

"Let us holdfast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful who promised)." Hebrews 10:23.

THE Apostle is drawing certain inferences from the Covenant of Grace upon which he has been enlarging. He shows that God has made a Covenant with His people by which they are effectually preserved. "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put My Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." He shows that by this Covenant the fear of returning to our old sin is removed and the guilt of our sin is forever put away. He bids us, therefore, be bold in our approaches to God. As pardoned men, upon whom there is no sin, he bids us exercise the freedom of near access to God, who has accepted us in Christ. Then he tells us that since we are put in such a blessed position—a position which is altogether unique—it becomes us to hold fast to what we have received. Since the glorious Gospel has done so much for us, let us never quit it. Since it has brought us into a condition which angels might envy, let us never think of leaving it. Let us not dream of giving up that Divine principle which has worked us such blessedness, but, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering."

I pray God the Holy Spirit to bless these words as we shall think them over. May He make this evening's meditation a means of establishment to us that, while we hold fast the profession of our faith, the blessed Truths of that faith may also hold us fast as an anchor holds a ship! Never was there a time in which this

was more necessary. That exhortation, "Let us hold fast," might well be written on the cover of every Christian's Bible. We live in such a changing age that we need all to be exhorted to be rooted and grounded, confirmed and established in the Truth of God. I shall call your attention, first, to this point—what we have. We have faith and, according to the second rendering, which is adopted by the revisers, we have hope. Then, secondly, what we have done. We have made a profession of that faith—a confession of that hope. Then, thirdly, what we are now to do—to hold fast that profession of faith and hope. And if you ask me, in the fourth place, why we are to do it!

I shall, in closing, give you this reason—because "He is faithful who promised." If God is faithful, let us be faithful, too. Since until now He has proven Himself most true, let us pray that we may also be true.

I. First, then, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us think of WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE by the Grace of God.

If we read the text according to our present authorized translation, we have faith. We have made a public avowal of our faith. We can lay our hands upon our hearts and say, "Lord, You know all things. You know that we have faith in Jesus Christ Your Son." Yes, we have obtained what the Apostle calls "like precious faith"—it is a rare jewel and he is rich that possesses it.

If we have not this faith in possession, let us pause, here, and ask for it and let us confess to God the great sin of unbelief in not believing in such a one as the Son of God who cannot lie—whose life is so transparently true that to doubt Him is a superfluity of naughtiness—an awful insult to the majesty of His faithfulness. Yet it would not be true for us to say—some of us—that we do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for we do. We have no other confidence. Where could we find any other! He is the rock of our salvation! We could not invent another trust, however hard we were put to it, or however much we wished to do so. If Jesus were to say, "Will you, also, go away?" we would be compelled to answer, "Lord, to whom should we go? You have the words of eternal life." If the question is whether we have perfect holiness, we must answer it in the negative, to our great sorrow. If the question is whether we are highly advanced in Divine Grace, we would not dare say that we are. It would be immodest if we put forth such a pretension! But if the enquiry is, "Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?" then without hesitation we reply, "Lord, we trust You with undivided faith."

Trembling though it is, our faith is true. And though it does not always work in us all the fruit we would desire, yet it does operate in a very blessed way upon our walk and conversation. We believe that Jesus is the Christ and our trust for eternal life is in Him alone!

It is not a matter of question with you, dear Friend, is it, as to whether you know Jesus to be the Son of God, very God of very God? It is past all question with you that Jesus bore your sins in His own body on the tree. You have no doubt about His wondrous death and His marvelous Resurrection from among the dead. You believe that He has offered a Sacrifice, once, which once offered has ended the sin of His people and that He has gone into His Glory and is now sitting at the right hand of God, expecting till His foes are made His footstool. You have no more doubt about that than you have about your own existence! You also believe that He will shortly come to be our Judge—that He will gather the nations before Him and that He will reign King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Your faith, then, in the Lord Jesus Christ is not a matter of "if," and, "but"—you stake your salvation on it! I can truly say that if what I preach is not true, I am a lost man. I have invested all that I have in Christ. If this boat sinks, I drown, for I cannot swim and I know no other lifeboat. Christ is All in All to me—without Him I can do nothing, I have nothing, I am nothing! Jesus, in the matter of salvation, is everything from beginning to end for me! And you can say the same, I know.

You have faith, nor does your faith confine itself to the belief in the Person and work of Christ and to a simple trusting of yourself to Him, but you believe all that is revealed in relation to Jesus. All the stars which make up the southern cross shine with clear brilliance for you. Every Truth of God which is revealed in Holy Scripture is embraced by your faith and held tenaciously. To you I know, Beloved, it is only sufficient to prove that it is so written in the Bible and you believe it. A Truth may sometimes amaze you because of its greatness, but that does not stagger your faith, for your faith deals with mysteries and is familiar with sublimities which it never dreams of comprehending! Yes, we openly acknowledge that we believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Triune God! And we believe in the election of Grace. We believe in the eternal purposes of God and in the working out of all those purposes to the praise of the Glory of His Grace. If God tells us anything, we accept it as sure, unquestionable, infallible Truth. If He veils anything, we desire to leave it veiled, for the limit of Revelation is the limit of our faith.

We may imagine this or imagine that, but we think nothing of our imaginations! Our faith deals with what God says, not with what learned men think. What the Spirit of God has written in this inspired Book is the Truth of God to us and we allow no human teaching to rank side by side with it. Well, then, we have faith—faith that believes, faith that learns, faith that reclines, faith that trusts herself entirely in the love of God—faith that can say, "Father into Your hands I commit my spirit." We have it, and we know that we have it! If any of you here do not know it, do not rest until you do know it. Unbelief calls God a liar—do not live a moment in such a horrible God-provoking sin! Not to trust Christ is to abide under the wrath of God. "He that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." May we never remain in such a state as that, but come to a knowledge of the Truth and to a sound faith in that Truth—for this is the faith of God's elect.

But another reading—and a very good reading, too—runs thus, "The confession of our hope." Oh yes, Beloved, if we have faith we have hope. We will take both renderings, for they are both correct in fact, if not in the letter. We have a blessed hope, a hope most "sure and steadfast, which enters into that which is within the veil." If I begin to describe our hope, I must begin with what, I think, is always the topmost stone of it—the hope of the Second Advent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—for we believe that when He shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in Glory. We know that He has gone up into Heaven. His Apostles saw Him as He ascended from Olivet—and we believe the words which the angels declared soon after His departure to remind us of His coming again—"This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven." We expect Him to descend in Person and we hope, ourselves, to behold Him in that day. We expect Him to stand in the latter day upon the earth and, in our own flesh risen from the dead, we expect to behold our Savior and our God! This is the glorious hope of the Church! This is how she expects to be victorious over the world—the Lord shall come and end her conflict in complete triumph! As His First Coming has laid the foundations of His empire, so His Second Coming shall bring forth the cornerstone thereof with shouts of, "Grace, Grace, unto it."

Wrapped up in that hope, we have personal hopes of our own, which hopes are, first, that our spirits, when we depart the body, shall be with Christ. We have been with Him, here, and we believe we shall be with Him there. Though in some sense while we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord, yet in another sense He is with us even now. We

expect, before long, to be absent from the body and, in a fuller sense, present with the Lord. Such is our joyful hope and expectation—Glory, millennium, Heaven, eternity—all lie within the circle of our hope. Ours is not the larger, but the largest hope.

We expect that after a while the trumpet shall sound and our bodies shall be raised from beds of dust and silent clay—and that thus we shall be perfected in our manhood as spirit, soul and body. The day of our Lord's appearing will be the day of the redemption of the body from the dust with which it mingles. We expect, then, as perfect in Christ Jesus, made in the image of Him who is the Firstborn among many brethren, to live forever and ever in eternal blessedness, enjoying the life of God at His right hand where there are pleasures forevermore. We have a joyful, glorious, blessed hope which purifies, comforts, strengthens and sustains us—and this hope is in us now!

As the pastor of this Church, I can joyfully say of the most of those who are here present, that you have a good hope through Grace. That hope gilds the darkness of the present—it is your candle through the long and weary night. You are not always to be sickly, poor and suffering. This hope sheds its light upon the future and reveals glories brighter than imagination could invent! At times when you realize that hope, you almost feel the crown of life settling down upon your brow and removing your throbbing pain once and for all. In the power of that hope you put on the sandals of the Light of God and the garments of immortality—and take your place among the celestial throng! Many a time, by faith, you walk along those streets which are paved with pure gold, like transparent glass, and as you tread the shining way you converse with the shining ones who dwell in the New Jerusalem! Hope already hears with her quick ears the songs of the redeemed and her eye beholds the Lord whom you love enthroned in the highest! Oh, how near does hope bring our Well-Beloved, whom, having not seen, we love! In whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of Glory!

We have faith and we have hope—and we know that we have them. Are we not enriched with the Grace of God? Where faith and hope are found, love cannot be far off, for the three Divine sisters are seldom separated. Let us love the Lord who has given us the first two.

II. Secondly, we have gone a step further than the silent possession of faith and hope. We have made A PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH AND A CONFESSION OF OUR HOPE. I am not going to say much about this, but to remind

you of certain joyously solemn facts.

You remember the time, dear Brothers and Sisters, when you first made a profession of your faith. It may do many of us good to go back to those early days. We are getting on in years, some of us, but we do not wish to feel old—at least we want to keep as much of the freshness and joy of youth as we well can! Cheerfulness is most becoming in Christians—we have a life within us of later birth than that which our mothers gave us—we will, therefore, measure our age from our second rather than our first birth. I like to see the old man grow young when he talks of Christ! Let him on that point become enthusiastic, even as in his boyhood. When he speaks of the loving kindness of the Lord to him, he should show the mellowness of years and the energy of youth in happy combination. Perhaps some of you remember the place, the spot of ground, where Jesus met with you. If you do not, at least you remember when you first whispered to your own heart with trembling hope, "I think I know the Lord." You were almost startled at the echo of your own words! You were afraid that you had been presumptuous! There was great tenderness of conscience upon you, then, and you would not have professed what was not true for all the world. You said within yourself, "I half said that I was a Believer, but I do not think I dare say it again."

Yet, within a short time, it oozed out again, when you were in company and felt forced to defend your Savior. It was true of you in a blessed sense, "Your speech betrays you. You, also, were with Jesus of

Nazareth." At last it grew so warm round about you that you thought you might as well come out for Jesus and derive help from the confession. The adversaries were ferreting you out and you thought you had better come out and say, boldly, once and for all, "It is even so!" The true Pilgrim never wishes to enter the House Beautiful if he has not a right to be there. He is afraid that he may be guilty of intrusion and he, therefore, hopes the porter at the gate will only admit him when he feels quite sure that he is a Pilgrim such as the Lord of the Way would permit to enter His House.

It was a day of great trembling, but of great joy, when first we avowed our faith in Jesus! What we said we meant. We salted our words with our tears, but oh, we felt it such an honor to be numbered with the people of God! If we had

been promised a seat on the floor, or had been allowed only to hear the Gospel in the coldest corner of the building, we should then have been fully content! We sang and meant it—

"Might I enjoy the meanest place

Within Your House, O God of Grace,

Not tents of ease, nor thrones of power,

Should tempt my feet to leave Your door." We need soft cushions now. We cannot stand to hear a sermon now, nor yet travel very far, especially in damp weather. It is very strange that we should have become so delicate, but it is so. How many miles we could walk when first we knew the Lord! The miles have grown much longer lately, or else our love has grown much shorter! Those were blessed days—changeable, showery, with little more than the dusk of dawn about them—but still there was a morning freshness about them upon which we look back with supreme delight and somewhat of regret. Then was it a time of love, a season of buds and flowers and songbirds and overflowing life and hope!

Thus early in my discourse I would most earnestly say to you—Hold fast the profession of your faith. By the memories of the day when you made that profession, be firm in it to the end. If you were not false, then; if you were not deceivers then; hold fast the confession of your hope without wavering, for, "He is faithful who promised." To me it is a solemn memory that I professed my faith openly in Baptism. Vividly do I recall the scene. It was the third of May and the weather was cold because of a keen wind. I see the broad river, the crowds which lined the banks and the company upon the ferryboat. The Word of the Lord was preached by a man of God who is now gone Home. And when he had so done, he went down into the water and we followed him and he baptized us. I remember how, after being the slave of timidity, I rose from the liquid grave quickened into holy courage by that one act of decision, consecrated therefore forth to bear a lifelong testimony!

It was by burial with Christ in Baptism that I confessed my faith in His death, burial and Resurrection. By an avowed death to the world, I professed my desire from that day on to live with Jesus, for Jesus and like Jesus. Oh that I had been more faithful to that profession! But there it was and I am not ashamed of it, nor wishful to run back from it. Ah no, I bear in my body that watermark, that fulfillment of the Holy Scriptures, which says, "Having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and your bodies washed with pure water."—

"High Heaven that heard the solemn vow, That vow renewed shall daily hear, Till in life's latest time I bow, And bless, in death, a bond so dear."

Let us remember, also, the many times in which we have repeated that profession of faith, that confession of hope, for instead of retracting it, we have gone on to repeat it. We have been marked anew with the King's name. If you ask how you have renewed your vows, I reply—"You have done it many a time at the table of communion. You have sat there and feasted with your Lord and you have not been ashamed of being there, I am sure. No, you have often feared that it was too good to be true that such a one as you should be eating bread with the children when not long ago you begged for the crumbs which fell from their table! You have sat at the banquet of bread and wine and, in so doing, you have borne witness to the death of Christ until He comes. Thus you have in frequent feasts of love confessed your joyful hope!"

And beside that, in many a Prayer Meeting you have been present and, by your very presence, have expressed your belief that it is not a vain thing to wait upon God. You have also joined in the prayer and this is no mean profession of faith. In many a service, when Christ has been preached, you have been there, not merely to assist by your presence, but because you have agreed with it all. Your heart has, at times, so burned within you, that you have thought it proper to say, "Amen!" You longed to cry, "Hallelujah!" And it was almost a pity you did not do so, for the outburst would have done no hurt to anybody. Perhaps, sometimes, you have done it and you have startled yourself and many others! By such an exclamation you have renewed your profession of your faith.

You have repeated your profession in the shop, in the market, in the place of business, among your friends, in your family and to the partner of your life. Those around you know you to be professedly an heir of Heaven, a child of God! It is well that they should. Why should not the children of Light be as well known as the children of darkness? Why should you conceal yourselves?

As for me and such of us as stand prominently out to preach the Word of God, how many times have we made a profession? I hope our preaching has not been done "professionally," but certainly we can neither preach, nor lead the devotions of a congregation without professing our faith and declaring our hope!

I again break in upon the latter part of my discourse by saying—after all these times in which we have worn our Master's livery, shall we desert Him? After those many occasions in which we have borne His mark upon our foreheads, can we think of becoming apostates? Christ has been confessed by us in the most solemn forms over and over again—shall we be doubly forsworn? Shall we become sevenfold traitors? No, by His rich and Sovereign Grace, I would say to you, believing that the Holy Spirit will help you to keep the command, "Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering; for He is faithful who promised."

We have considered how we began this profession and we have also seen how often we have made it since. Let us think for a minute what it has cost us. Has it been worthwhile to be on the Lord's side? Religion has cost many of its disciples somewhat dear but it has cost nothing compared with its worth! What bashfulness it cost you to make the first confession of your faith! What a struggle it then appeared! You were weeks, some of you, before you dared to come and see such an awful person as the minister, to speak of your conversion to him. It had taken you weeks even to tell it to your wife or your husband! The dear soul, for once, seemed to grow into a very dragon when you needed to tell him that you had found the Lord. I have known parents terribly afraid to let their children know of their conversion. They were never half so afraid of sinning as they became afraid of being charged with repenting! You surmounted that difficulty, did you not? You cried to God about it and you obtained courage—and now you wonder how you could have been so foolishly timid. Do not, in the future, fall back into the same fears.

But perhaps some of you lost the friendship of many by becoming disciples of the Lord Jesus. I know one who became a member of this Church—she had moved in high and fashionable circles, but she said to me, "they have left me—every one of them." I said, "I am very thankful, for it will save you the trouble of quitting them. They will do you no good if they profess to be your friends. And they will do you less harm by giving you the cold shoulder." It is about the best thing that happens to a Christian when worldlings cut his acquaintance. "Come you out from among them," is to many a severe command. But all difficulty is removed when the world turns out from us and casts out our name as evil! Still, it has cost many a tear, and many a sigh for the first Believer in certain families to take up his cross and come right out and follow Christ. "Canting hypocrite!" "Sniveling pretender!" Such titles and worse are quickly thrown at us! It is but natural that the world we leave should give us a parting kick.

We, of course, are everything that is bad as soon as we forsake the ways of the world to follow Christ. It is the old fashion—after this manner they dealt with our fathers. I do not suppose that any two men, after a while, counts it at all a hardship, or mourns as though some strange thing had happened to him! Did they not swim through seas of blood in the old times? Did they not fight with beasts at Ephesus and reach to Heaven by the way of the stake? We suffer so little compared with the persecutions of our forerunners that it is hardly worth a thought! But yet, to some very tender hearts, it is a costly business to make a profession of faith. And I say to them—Have you suffered these many things in vain? Will you now go back? Will you turn, again, to the beggarly elements of the world, after having confronted persecution and borne the enmity of men? No, by the Grace of God you will "hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering!"

"But what good does our profession do?" asks one. I do not know that we need ask that question, or answer it, either. If a course of action is commanded of God, it is ours to obey whether we can see any use in it or not. It is put continually in the Word of God, "He that with his heart believes, and with his mouth makes confession of Him, shall be saved," or in other words, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Faith in the Truth of God and an open profession of that faith are constantly put together in the Scriptures! There must be the confession of Christ outwardly, as well as the believing in Christ inwardly. The Lord Jesus, Himself, has said, "Except a man shall take up his cross and follow Me, he cannot be My disciple." It is not the Lord's will that we should go in the dark to Heaven along some private road of our own! We are to come out and follow Him in this evil generation, or else He will be ashamed of us when He comes in the Glory of His Father.

If the question is asked again, "What is the good of an open profession?" I would say, Much every way. It is, in itself, a grand thing for his manliness for a man to boldly say, "I am a Christian." It is good for a soldier of the Cross to draw the sword and throw away the scabbard by being openly known to be a Christian. The world then ceases to urge its

coarser temptations. The enemies know where you are and do not raise that question again. Your profession becomes a confirmation of your purpose to lead a better life. You say, "I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord and how can I go back? How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? The vows of the Lord are upon me!" All this is a protection to you in the hour of trial. To show your colors may not appear to be a great thing, but to many it is half the battle.

Besides, the open confession of our faith has a good influence upon others. How could there be a Christian Church at all if every Christian concealed his faith in his own bosom? Without the Christian Church as an organization, how would all the good work that has to be done in the reclaiming of sinners

be attended to? Where would be our public proclamation of the Gospel? Where our missions and ministers? If you love your Lord and have faith and hope in Him, do not delay to come forward and acknowledge His name and cause. Say boldly, "Where are His people? I will join with them! Do they meet with any reproach for obedience to Him? I will share that reproach! Have they any work for Christ on hand? I will take my share of that work! Yours am I, Son of David, and all that I have, and I give myself to You to be Yours forever and ever."

It will be to your lasting honor and enduring joy to be found wearing the livery of the Prince of Peace, marching in the ranks of the saints, contending earnestly for the Truth of God and advancing the Kingdom of your God! Thus have I spoken upon the profession of our faith and hope.

III. The third point is, WHAT ARE WE NOW TO DO? I have entrenched upon it, already, and I have done so intentionally. The answer is—we are called upon to holdfast the profession of our faith.

Of course this includes the holding fast of your faith. The things which you have believed, continue to believe. There may be an advance—there ought to be an advance—in politics because the basis to begin with was wrong. And, as you advance, you only approximate a little more nearly to that which is perfectly just, honest and righteous. It is a far cry from feudalism to a righteous commonwealth! But there can be no advance in true religion! If it is true at first, the same things are still true and must be true forever and ever. We feel that there can be no progress in the foundational Truths of Christianity when we remember such a text as this, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, forever." Revelation comes from the mind of God, like Minerva is fabled to have sprung from the brain of Jove, full grown, full armed. Nothing may be taken from it! Nothing may be added to it!

I, for one, am perfectly satisfied with an Apostolic faith. If anyone can go beyond the Apostles, let him go—I shall not attempt to do so. I am satisfied to believe what Paul believed. Oh that I were worthy to unloose the laces of his shoes! Though Paul is not my Lord and Master, yet I reverence the Holy Spirit as He speaks through Paul's Epistles. I am perfectly satisfied with what Jesus revealed by His own teaching and the teaching of His Apostles—and going beyond that seems to me to imply that the Revelation is imperfect. But imperfect it is not! It is plain, clear and finished, and they that add to it, or take from it, will incur the plagues with which the Book is closed and guarded. God shall take away from such their names out of the Book of Life and out of the Holy City. Hold fast to the old Truth of God!

The ships in yonder port are swinging with the tide just now. Please God they will swing back to the same place when the tide turns. They have done so before. There came a day when our dissenting Churches almost all went round to Socinianism and then their chapels were empty and their day of power was gone. Earnest men rose up and preached the old Gospel, again, and there was a grand revival! Now they are going off again, turning every man to his own error, except that the Lord has a faithful company that hold fast the faith and will not let it go—and these will yet live to see a great revulsion of feeling! If they do not, that is a small matter to them—to be faithful to their God is their first and their last business!

Hold, next to your hope. Hope in Christ and in His coming and in the victory of the Truth of God. If the storms lower, believe that there is fair weather ahead. And if the night darkens into a seven-fold blackness, believe that the morning comes despite the darkening glooms! Have faith and trust in Him that lives, and was dead, and is alive forever-more! Let your hope begin to hear the hallelujahs which proclaim the reign of the Lord God Omnipotent, for reign He must, and the victory shall be unto Him and to His Truth. Hold fast your faith. Hold fast your hope.

But that is not the text. It is holdfast your profession of faith, your confession of hope—that is to say, stand to what you have done by way of open declaration of these things. Constantly keep up your confession. You made it once. Renew it. Often and often say—

"I'm not ashamed to acknowledge my Lord,

Nor to defend His cause; Maintain the honor of His Word, The Glory of His Cross."

You are Christians, not for a time, but for eternity¹ Your new birth is not into a dying existence, but into life everlasting! You are born again of a living and incorruptible seed that lives and abides forever! Therefore, quit yourselves like men and be strong. Stand fast, "Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Continue your confession and never conceal it.

There are times when you will be inclined to put your flag away into the canvas case and hide your coat of arms in the cellar. Then you may fitly judge that the devil is getting an advantage over you and that it is time that you ceased to be beguiled by his sorceries. Tear up the wrappings, throw the bag away and nail your flag aloft where every eye can see it! Whenever you feel inclined to be ashamed of Christ, do not deliberate, but say, "This is wrong. There is coming over me something that I must not endure. If I were in a right state of mind I should never feel like this." Never yield to shameful cowardice—scorn such detestable meanness! Away with it, man! Away with it! If you might have gone on peaceably and said nothing about your religion, yet whenever you feel at all afraid to do it, then say, "I must do it. I cannot allow my principles to remain in question. I will, in some way, make a demonstration of the faith that is in me, lest I prove a coward and a castaway after all."

Perhaps you may have to go into a certain company where you do not want to have it known that you are a Christian. It is imperative that you break through that snare and put the case beyond debate. If I were you, I would make my profession known in that very company because the idea that you must not be known to be a Christian will be very dangerous to you. I cannot exactly tell in what way it may endanger you, but it will surely do so and, therefore, whenever the thought of concealment crops up, down with it and come out clear and straight for Jesus! Only when you are out-and-out for Jesus can you be in a right condition. Anything short of this is full of evil! Since Satan tempts you to hide your faith, feel that he seeks your harm and, therefore, come out all the more decidedly.

Beloved Friends, may God help us never to do anything contrary to the confession of our faith. I have heard of such a thing as a Christian man making a confession of his faith by paying sixpence in the pound in the Bankruptcy Court. They say that he is making a good thing out of his failure. He is making his own damnation sure if he is robbing his creditors and yet professing to be a Christian! Here is a man making a confession of his faith. He is a very good Christian man in his own esteem, but he also knows a good glass of wine and is most fluent when he is getting far into the bottle. Have drunks any hope of eternal life? Look at yonder professor—he is going across to the public house to stand at the counter and drink with those who blaspheme! That is his way of confessing his faith, I suppose. It is not mine!

Have I not seen Christian women become noisily angry and say harsh things to their servants? That is showing your Christianity, is it? I do not want to be sarcastic, but I don't want you to tempt me to be so. If you love the Lord, live as if you loved Him! Let us all try to do so and let us watch that we never undo with our hands what we say with our tongues. I heard in Lancashire of some people who preached with their feet. It is the best way of preaching in the world. By your walk and conversation you will preach twice as well as by your talk! Your tongue is too soft a thing to influence dull minds, you must influence such by

your lives.

When we come to die we will gather up our feet in the bed and bear another and more solemn testimony to the Lord our God. We will set up one Ebenezer more on Jordan's brink and bear one more witness for Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood. I recollect what Whitefield said of himself. Someone said, "Dear Mr. Whitefield, I should like to be present with you when you come to die. What a testimony you will bear in your parting moments." "No," said that eminent servant of God, "I do not think I shall bear any testimony in death because I have borne so many testimonies in my life that my Lord will not want any from me when I die." So it came to pass. He stood at the top of the stairs the night before he died and preached his last sermon and then turned in and went to Heaven! Perhaps that is how some of us will write the finis to our lifework. At any rate, let us bear our testimonies while we can. Let us speak up for our Master while we may and, by-and-by, we shall see Him whom our soul loves and rejoice in Him forever!

IV. I may not detain you many more moments and, therefore, let me answer the question WHY ARE WE TO DO THIS? We are to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, because He is faithful who has promised.

Have you found Him faithful? Has the Lord failed you? Has the Lord been untrue in His promises to you? If He has, then do not hold fast your profession! If, after all, it has been a mistake and a delusion, then give it up! But if He is faithful who has promised—if He has kept His word to you, helped you in your trouble, sustained your heart under burdens, comforted you in the dark hour of trial—if till this moment you have proven the power of prayer, the wisdom of Providence and the truth of the Sacred Word—then deal with my Lord as He has dealt with you! Be not faithless to the Crucified. Oh, be not Judas to Him who is Jesus to you! He gave His heart for you and even after death it poured out blood and water for you—give your whole heart to Him! If it is so that these Truths of God are firmly established and that God keeps His Covenant, then let us come at once to the feet of the blessed Lord and say, "Lord, we do not regret that we entered Your service. On the contrary, we are ready to begin again." If we had our lives to live, over again, we that began to be Christians as lads would begin earlier! We that have served the Lord desire no better Master and no better service, but we would wish Him to find, in each one of us, a better servant. Lord, we have been happy with You. When we have been unhappy, it has been our own fault, not Yours. We would return to You and say, "Permit us to serve You still. We would be Your servants forever."

I have heard of a husband and wife who felt their love for each other to be so strong that they almost wished to go through the wedding ceremony again, to show how content they were to bear the easy yoke of married love. Many of us could say the same. We would also be joined anew to our Lord! Let us take afresh His yoke upon us. Let us put our shoulder down to the Cross, again, and commence again to serve the Lord Jesus with the love of our espousals and the freshness of our earliest days. May the Lord bless us to that end!

While we are doing this, hope that others who never did love Him before will now say, "We will come with you and begin a new life from this good hour." It will be a happy, happy circumstance if this should be the case. God grant it may be so with many, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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