

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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“SHE WAS NOT HID.”

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## A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 15TH, 1888, BY

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“And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.”—Luke viii. 47.

LAST Sabbath morning we spoke upon the woman who was healed of her issue of blood. After having spent all her living upon physicians, and being disappointed in them all, she touched the Saviour's garment and was healed immediately. She came behind him, for she did not wish to be seen. She said not a word: she had not the courage to ask for the blessing in an open manner. When cured, she slunk away into the crowd: she was anxious to be unobserved. Now, if the story had ended here, you would not have been surprised. It was a case of extreme delicacy, that might seem to require a specially secret ending, by the woman's being permitted to go her way home, happy and whole.

But now, suppose that, in the tenderness of our Saviour's sympathy with this trembling woman, he had permitted her to depart without making an open confession, what would have been the consequence? The Saviour willed that the miracle should be recorded in three of the four Gospels, and if it had ended where we left it last Sabbath morning, then such is our human nature, that we should have drawn from it the inference that saving faith need not be confessed. Our natural love of ease, and our desire to avoid the cross, would have made us follow this woman's example, and we should have tried to touch the Lord for healing, and then run away from him without making any profession of discipleship. Many would have quoted her case as a reason why they might be allowed to escape the responsibilities, duties, and sufferings which discipleship might involve. If the Saviour had permitted this woman to retire in silence, many cowardly believers would have said that the Saviour's silence gave consent to her retiring without a word, and that they might safely imitate her. I know the men and their style of reasoning. This would have been fine nuts for them. Think how this story would have been used in times of martyrdom. The cowardly would have

argued, "We may have to go to prison or to the stake if we confess Christ; why should we be so needlessly daring? We can receive grace from Jesus quite unknown to anybody, and having gained salvation we can mingle with the crowd and avoid exposing ourselves to danger." The Saviour would not allow us to find in this case an apology for an evil course, and so he called out the woman whom he had cured. The spirit of hiding, thank God, was not found in the church in martyr times; for holy men and women came forward and confessed their faith with more than common eagerness.

If the narrative had ended where we left it last Sunday, what a quietus it would have afforded to those good, peace-loving people who, in these days of blasphemy and rebuke, will take no sides at all! "Anything for a quiet life." They are very comfortable, and mean to remain so. What does it matter to them though the whole church should be rotten with error? They hope to go quietly to heaven—indeed, they feel they are going there; and, if they are not soldiers of the cross, yet they trust they are followers of the Lamb; if they do not contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, yet still they eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and enjoy the privileges of a comfortable religion. That is the present policy of many, and gladly enough would they have sheltered themselves behind this woman. She, however, was not hid, nor may they be. We have enough apologies for selfishness and ease, and compromise, without the Saviour's supplying us with one; and so he took special care in this instance that nothing so evil should be made out of it. What might have been a defence for guilty silence he turns into a grand argument for open confession. He will not allow concealment in this case, because he will not tolerate it in any case, but will have us take up our cross and follow him.

That is the subject for this morning: may I be helped of the Holy Spirit so to handle it, that any here who are sincere in their love to Christ, but yet have never avowed it, may be forced to come out at once, and before the Lord Jesus Christ and his people declare that they have touched him, and that they have been healed immediately.

Let me say to you, *her hiding seemed very excusable*; but, secondly, *her hiding was not permitted*; and, thirdly, *your hiding should not be excused nor permitted, but should come to an end at once*.

I. First, then, we say concerning this woman, that HER HIDING SEEMED VERY EXCUSABLE. I have already said that if, in any instance, a cure might have been concealed, this was one; and it was so for many reasons. First, because of *this woman's natural timidity, and because of the nature of her malady*. It would appear that if in any case the thing might have been done in a corner, or if done in a crowd, might have been passed over without remark, this was an evident case in point. Yet the Saviour, tenderly considerate as he is, will not have it so. And you, dear friend, may say, "I am naturally so very timid and retiring; pray excuse me." This woman was not only bashful, but her sickness made her rightly wish to remain in obscurity. "I should not like my story to be known," says one. She might have justly said the same: it must have been hard indeed for her to confess what the Lord had done. Yet she had to acknowledge his grace openly,

and so must you. She is a woman sick and faint, who for twelve years has been growing weaker and weaker, yet when she is healed she must come forward and confess the cure. Does this seem hard to you? Surely it is the least she can do, and she ought to do it of her own accord. Yet if silence might have been allowed in any case, hers was so delicate a matter that she might have had the doubtful privilege of receiving mercy without acknowledging it.

In addition to this, remember that *the Saviour did not court publicity*. He laid no injunction upon those whom he healed that they should tell everyone of the marvel. He did not seek fame or observation: he did not strive nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. In several cases he bade the healed ones tell no man what was done; and in this case he had given the cure without any open request for it. Might she not from this conclude that her secret act of faith was approved, and that it might continue secret, since it had gained the boon? You may reason in that way about yourself, and say that Jesus does not need that you should testify for him. Indeed, it is true that he does not need anything of any of us; but is this a fit way of treating your Lord? You may say that quietude on your part would be excusable; but as the Saviour did not think so in this woman's case, I believe that he will not think so in your case. I trust that in his mercy he will deal with you as with her, and compel you to come out and own the wonders of his grace.

There was another reason why she might have thought she need not make a public confession, and that was, that *the Saviour was at that time exceedingly occupied*. The multitude thronged him, and he was on the way to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, to attend to his child; she would only be stopping him in his career of love. Should the Saviour be detained for her? Already Jairus did not look upon her very cheerfully when he saw that Jesus stopped for her; what would he do if she caused a still longer delay? Besides, she might naturally argue, "Why should such an insignificant person as I am detain the prophet? What am I that I should take up even a second of his time? Jairus is before me; let him take his turn. I have the blessing, and there is no need to detain the Lord." You know how ready we are to make excuses when a duty is not pleasant: I suppose you are very handy at it yourself. But now since this excuse, if it ever occurred to the woman, was soon disposed of, I would advise you also to cast away all subterfuges, and remember that it is written, "He that with his heart believeth, and with his mouth maketh confession of him, shall be saved," or quoting an equally plain Scripture, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The faith and the confession are put together by the Holy Spirit: what God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

Excuse might also have been found for the healed woman in the fact, that *her cure would make itself known by its results*. When she reached home everybody would see that she was quite another person; and when they asked how it came to pass, she could tell them all about it. They would see in her life the best evidence of the work of our Lord upon her. Is it not better to speak by your life than by your lips? Exactly so, and herein lies the apparent force of this excuse for disobedience. It

needs some truth to keep a falsehood on its legs. Note well that this woman was not permitted to withhold the open avowal of her indebtedness to Christ, even though it was certain that her health and her conduct would witness to his power. I know what you say: "I need not join a church: I can be a Christian at home. Better live a Christian life than wear a Christian name." My friend, we never proposed to you that you should put the wearing of a Christian name in the place of a Christian life—we have solemnly spoken the reverse of such a notion. We would earnestly remind you of our Saviour's words, "These things ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone." Attention to one duty is no justification for the neglect of another. I charge you, disobey not in any point. Confess your Lord; own what he has done for you; and be sure that the outcome of your life supports your confession. Have the shaft of godly living by all means, but crown it with the capital of a brave confession.

Another pretext might have served this woman, if she desired an excuse. She might truthfully have said, "It is evident that *an open confession is not essential to my cure, for I am cured.*" She was healed immediately, and it is added, that she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague: so that she knew that she was healed, and it was clear that an avowal of her faith was not necessary to her receiving that great boon from the Lord. Hence, many argue, "To confess Christ and join with his people is not necessary to my salvation." Who said it was? Open confession is not necessary, nay, is not permitted, till you are saved. How could this woman have made any confession of a cure till she was cured? But being cured, it then became necessary that she should confess it: not necessary to the cure, that is clear, but necessary because of the cure. It is always necessary for a disciple to do what his Lord bids him. It is essential for a soldier of the cross to follow his Captain's orders. Jesus bids us let our light shine; dare we hide it away? If we have received grace at his hands he would have us confess that we have received it, and surely our sense of justice makes it needful for us to own our obligation.

Thus I have shown you that in her case many excuses might have been made; and yet, after all, it would not have been a fitting thing if she had stolen away in the crowd, and gone home cured without praising and blessing her Lord. It would have been to her everlasting dishonour. I think she felt this when the Saviour fixed those dear eyes of his upon her and said, "Somebody hath touched me." What a vision of lovingkindness and peace it was to her! In a moment she must have thought, "How foolish I was to go behind him! The very look of his face is comfort, the glance of his eye is joy. He would have granted my request with a smile." When she saw what he was like, and perceived the right royal bearing of The Bountiful One, she blushed that she had thought to steal a cure from one so ready to give it. The sight of him was rebuke enough for her clandestine snatching at the blessing. As to going away then without thanking him, why, methinks the moment she saw his majestic mercy, the divine royalty of his goodness, she could not do otherwise than

fall at his feet and worship such a glorious Lord. Within herself she felt that it was a marvellous cure which had come to her by a touch of him, and she could not praise him enough. The stones would have cried out against her if she had not confessed his miracle of gracious power, and the earth would have refused to bear up such a monster of ingratitude. Instantly she fell down before him, and told him all the truth. The thoughts of her heart were revealed by her Lord, and never was Jesus more truly adored than by this poor creature, whose silence stood rebuked by her Lord's love, and condemned by his immeasurable goodness.

II. Secondly, HER HIDING WAS NOT PERMITTED BY THE SAVIOUR. I told you, in the opening of the discourse, that to have let her story finish without bringing her out would have been an encouragement to that practical denial of Christ which consists in concealing our faith in him. The unearthing of this woman from her hiding-place was wrought by the Saviour himself, and therefore, with all its apparent roughness, we may be sure that it was the kindest thing that could have been done. Her being brought out had the best of consequences.

For, first, an open confession on her part was needful *in reference to the Lord's glory*. Beloved, the miracles of Christ were the seals which God gave to his mission. He was a man sent of God, and the wondrous things that he did proved that God was with him. If the wonders which he wrought were not made known, the seals of his mission would have been concealed, and so would have lost much of their effect. How would men know that he was the very Christ, if they never heard that the sick were healed? If this woman concealed her cure others might do the same; and if they all did it, then Christ's commission would have no visible endorsement from the Lord God. I should like to impress this idea upon those of you who do not confess your Lord: whatever is right for you to do is right for other people to do. If it is right for one Christian not to confess Christ, and join a church, it must be allowable for other Christians to do the same. Where would be churches, where would be the continuance of gospel ordinances; and for the matter of that, who would be bound to be a preacher if no one is even bound to make an open profession? If *you* may go to heaven by the backstairs so may I, and God's grand entrance to the kingdom may be deserted. Who will care to go to heaven by the open way, with all its responsibility and opposition, if you can just as easily take the snug road behind the hedges, and slink into glory without observation? It will not do, brethren, if we consider what the Lord Jesus Christ deserves of us, and how our open confession tends to certify his mission. The change wrought in the spiritual and moral condition of the saved is God's attestation of the gospel; and if this is not to be spoken of, how is the world to know that God has sent the gospel at all?

Further, remember that *our Lord's miracles were illustrative of his teaching*. Properly viewed, the miracles of Christ are the pictures of a volume of which his sermons are the letterpress. You take *The Illustrated London News*, and you get the description of a public building, or the account of a grand ceremony: you are glad of the printed account, but you are much helped to form an idea of the whole business by the engravings. You would not like to lose the woodcut,

which is the chief feature of value in the paper. Now, in our Saviour's ministry his words were the letterpress, and his miracles were the engravings. If the engraving is to be torn away, or pasted over, a great injury is done to the paper; and even so our Lord's teaching would be greatly marred if its miracles were concealed. I showed you, last Lord's-day morning, that the healing of this woman was a wonderfully instructive incident; how could it remain unknown? Must it be passed over to gratify her fear? Must Jesus work this wonder, and nobody ever hear about it? As God is seen in his works of creation, Jesus is seen in his miracles of grace. Shall we rob him of his glory? God forbid that we should do him this serious dishonour. When first I knew the Lord, if anybody had said to me, "You will be ashamed to confess Christ although he has saved you. The day will come when you will blush to own his name," I should have felt indignant at the suggestion. Why, I wanted to tell everybody of the Saviour's love. If there had been nobody else to hear me, I should have had to tell the cat. I felt like Bunyan did when he said he wanted to tell the crows on the ploughed land all about it. I cannot understand how it is that you who know the Saviour, or think you do, can imagine it to be right to hide away, and cover up the glory of Christ. Oh, tell it! Tell it all the world over that he has healed us, forgiven us, and saved us.

But the confession had to be made *for the sake of others*. Do any of you wish to live unto yourselves? If you do, you need saving from selfishness. I have seen it brought as a charge against evangelical religion that we teach men to look to their own salvation first, and that this is a kind of spiritual selfishness. Ah, but if that salvation means salvation from selfishness, where is the selfishness of it? It is a very material point in salvation to be saved from hardness of heart and carelessness about others. Do you want to go to heaven alone? I fear you will never go there. Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that. What is the most natural plan to use for the salvation of others but to bear your own personal testimony? Our Lord healed this woman for the good of the whole crowd. They must have all been astonished when they heard her story. He did it especially for the good of Jairus. Jairus' little daughter had been living twelve years, and this poor woman had been dying twelve years—note the exact time in each case. Surely there was a loud call to Jairus in this cure to exercise faith in Jesus, and it must have greatly helped his faith, which was not quite so strong as it seemed.

Do you not think that her public declaration was required *for the good of our Lord's disciples*? When they heard her story, did they not treasure it up, and speak of it to one another in after days, and thereby strengthen each other's faith? The remembrance of these remarkable miracles, which they saw their Master work, would serve them in good stead in times of persecution. Beloved, had not the Lord an eye even to you and to me, who were to be born by his grace centuries later on? Do you not think that he fetched the healed one out on purpose that this being put into the gospel might bring out hidden ones throughout all generations? Did not our Lord foresee that

many would be encouraged to touch the hem of his garment by faith through hearing of her cure? Thus, you see, the trembling woman must own her Lord, that her Lord's household may be blest thereby.

But especially she had to do this *for her own good*. The Saviour had designs of love in bringing this poor trembler forward before all the people. By this he saved her from a host of fears which would have haunted her. Suppose she had gone home healed, and had never confessed it; surely she would have felt uneasy? A sense of having stolen the boon without leave or license would have caused her uneasy dreams and sad apprehensions. She would worry herself with the fear that the disease would soon return again, or that she would die from a fearful judgment. Besides, she would have said to herself, "I was little better than a thief. I did not come in by the door, but climbed over the wall. I am afraid it will go hard with me at the day of judgment. Will a man rob God? Have not I robbed the Saviour himself?" All such fears were rendered impossible by her open confession, and that which followed upon it. Jesus assured her that he had taken no offence; he wished her to have no fears, for, said he, "Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace."

She had been a very timid and trembling woman, but now she would shake off all improper timidity. I have known many persons cured of timidity by coming forward to confess Christ. I could mention cases of persons who have been very retiring, and scarcely able to say a word upon any subject, but when they joined the church and were baptized, their open confession broke the ice, and the waters of their life were set in motion. Our Lord removes this infirmity by our obedience: "in keeping his commandments there is great reward."

Our Lord also gave her an increased blessing after her confession. Perhaps the Lord is reserving some great favour for some of you when you avow his name. You hide indoors, and he allows you milk enough to live upon; but if you would come out and confess him, he would feed you with the strong meat of the kingdom. You would become a braver and more useful person if you would take up your cross. You are now like Saul, the son of Kish, hiding among the stuff: come out and be a king. Confess what Christ has done for you. For what did the Saviour give her?

He gave her clearly to know her relationship to him. He said, "Daughter"! I do not know that the Saviour ever called any other woman daughter, for he was guarded in his speech to women; but to this one woman he said, "Daughter." Oh, may the Lord give trembling ones to see and feel the near and dear relationship which exists between Christ and their souls! May your sonship come up before your minds most vividly, as a reward of obedience. May Jesus say to some of you, "Son, be of good comfort"; or to another, "Daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath saved thee." "What would I give," says one, "if Jesus would call me 'daughter'! Give him your whole self by believing in him, and confession of him, and see if he does not reveal to you his love. What choice revelations you lose through sinful silence I cannot tell you; but assuredly you miss many a cheering word from your Lord's own lip. If you will not

own him, how can you expect him to give you the spirit of adoption? If you receive instead the spirit of bondage you cannot wonder.

Next note that our Lord gave her joyousness. He said, "Daughter, be of good comfort." Smooth those wrinkles from thy brow, my daughter.

"Why should the children of a king  
Go mourning all their days?"

"Be of good comfort." Ah, friends! you hang your heads. Perhaps if you had grace enough to own Jesus more fully, you would hold your heads up, and the sun would shine into your faces, and you would march joyfully all the rest of your lives. I advise you to try it. One of the best medicines for low spirits will be found in a courageous obedience to Jesus. Keep close to the Crucified, and your own cross will grow light in fellowship with him.

Next notice that he gave a commendation to her faith: "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Why, it was not her faith which made her whole, was it? No, but Jesus puts his own crown upon the head of faith. It is always safe for Jesus to crown faith, because faith always crowns Jesus. Her faith would answer, "Lord, I did nothing, thou didst it all," and, therefore, Jesus ascribes her healing to her faith. How much I desire that you, who are now afraid of your own faith, would win your Lord's praise by coming out and bearing witness to what he has done for you! Then will you not only believe, but also know that you have believed, and end for ever your present state of miserable doubt.

Then the Lord gave her a word of precious quieting. He said, "Go in peace." As much as to say: Do not stop in this crowd, to be pushed about or stared at, but go home in quiet. Go home to your house, and to your friends, with a light heart. All is well. You enjoy my favour. I have called you daughter, and I will never disown you. I have blessed you, and you shall be blessed. I give you peace on earth and peace in heaven. O you that do love the Lord, and trust him, but yet have never declared your faith according to his command, you say, "We do not know how it is, but while we hear of God's people having great peace we do not enjoy it." You cannot expect to have peace, and yet be disobedient. If you do not side with Jesus, do you expect him to be at your side? You shall have bread and water, so that your soul shall be kept alive; but you cannot taste the wines on the lees, nor the fat things full of marrow, so long as you do not confess your Lord. The dainties of the cupboard are not for disobedient children. Are you ashamed of Jesus? How, then, can you expect him to give you the kisses of his mouth? That he should save you will be more than his promise; but as he loves you, he must and will discipline you unless you confess his name and his work. Why do you lose present comfort by neglect? All in the train of faith will go to heaven; but why do so many ride third-class, or even get into cattle-trucks? Why not ride first-class? To be out-and-out for Christ is to ride first-class. Confess your Lord. Determine never to hide your colours. Be heart and soul a Christian. Live for Jesus, and be ready to die for him:

this is to go to heaven first-class; and why should you not? Why will you be fretting and fuming, moaning and mourning, when you might as well be singing and dancing and feasting in the presence of your Lord and his household? Do you hesitate to own your Lord and Master? Ah, me! how shall I sufficiently grieve over you? Let not another day pass over your head till you have left Cowards' Castle and come into the ranks of the army of the Lord of hosts.

III. Thus I have already reached my last point: YOUR HIDING OUGHT TO BE ENDED. "Whom are you speaking to, sir?" Well, not to you, dear friends, who are always to the front, lifting the banner of the cross. "Whom are you speaking to, sir?" To you, my friend, if you are really a disciple, but secretly, for fear of the Jews. If you keep yourself to yourself, it is to you that I am speaking, and I desire to press upon you your obligations. *What owest thou to my Lord?* You are washed from your uncleanness. You are clothed with the robe of righteousness. You are accepted in the Beloved. You know that you have passed from death to life. Unless fearfully mistaken, you know that you are the Lord's. Well, then, own it. Do not be ashamed to take your place in the cross-bearing procession, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. By your love to Jesus, do not turn to the right, seeking your own ease; nor to the left, aiming at the peace of others, but go straight on where duty and Jesus lead you. This is still the way to honour and immortality.

Do you not think *you owe something to the church of God*, which kept the gospel alive in the world for you to hear? Did not a band of godly men and women meet together, and see that the gospel was preached? Was it not so that you were saved? Should you not help to keep that church going by whose means you were brought to Jesus?

May I be permitted also to say, I think *you owe something to the minister who led you to Jesus?* What a cheer it is to us when we get a letter from one who has found the Lord through our teaching; and better still, when face to face we meet one who has trusted the Saviour through our poor instrumentality! Those who are sowers of the seed know what a joy it is to see it spring up. Who are the people who cause us needless depression? Who are those who withhold needful encouragement? Why, those who do not come out and tell what grace has done for them. For the sake of those who labour among you in word and doctrine, I beseech you come forward. Common gratitude should lead you to let us know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Besides, *you owe it to yourselves.* Are you going to be mere bats, fluttering out when none will observe you, and hiding from the light? Are you going to be like mice, which only come out at night to nibble in the pantry? Quit yourselves like men! O you that are hidden in the clefts of the rocks, let the Saviour hear your voices, and see your countenances!

*You owe it to your family.* You should tell your household what grace has done for you. Many a person wonders that his sons and daughters do not turn out well, when he himself has never been openly on the Lord's side. "Oh," says one, "but then I am right in my heart,"

But is the light within to be shut up in a dark lantern? Who is to read a closed book? We want to see in the shop-window of your life some of the goods which are stored in the warehouse of your heart, or how can you trade for your Lord? When a man boldly says, "I believe in Jesus," and proves it by his actions, it has a holy influence upon his children, his servants, his companions: do you not desire to influence them aright?

Do you not think *you owe it to your neighbours to show your colours?* Why, there are whole streets in this city where scarcely a single person goes to a place of public worship. Should he slink there as if half ashamed of it? What is to become of us if the little salt loses its savour? There are regions in this city in which dwell hundreds of thousands of inhabitants in which attendance at public worship is so scanty that the churches and chapels have only a sprinkling of people. Should not you that love the Lord be very earnest to let it be known that there is still a God to be worshipped, a Saviour to be trusted? In these evil days above all others—

"Ye that are men now serve him,  
Against unnumbered foes;  
Your courage rise with danger,  
And strength to strength oppose."

Many crowd around him when Christ is on the winning hand. What is the worth of their hosannas? The style of man that a crucified Christ delights in is he who follows his Lord in the day of blasphemy and reproach. A true soldier of Jesus can stand up for his Lord alone. He is as true to Jesus when he is the only one as he would be if all the million went after him. Blessed is he who is not offended with Jesus, nor ashamed of his cross. O ye saved ones, run up your colours; fly them at the mast-head, nail them there; and never let the enemy take them down. Oh that God would move every one here that has been a little shy or backward to go without the camp and bear the Lord's reproach!

Now let me *hear some of your objections, and answer them.* I hope I have been answering them all through my sermon. Here is one. "Well, you know, Mr. Spurgeon, I am such an insignificant person. It cannot make any difference what I do." Yes, and this woman was a very insignificant person—only a woman! When I speak thus in English, it is a very ungallant speech, but if a Rabbi had said it in Christ's day, it would not have seemed at all out of place, for they taught that no holy person ought, in the streets, to allow a woman's dress to touch him, lest he should be defiled thereby. They thought that if a scribe tried to teach a woman the law, he dishonoured the law by doing so. Religious men lightly esteemed women in the Saviour's day. Our divine Lord never gave the slightest sanction to such an abominable spirit, and I am not going to lend any sanction to your saying "I am only a poor feeble woman." God thinks much of the lowly: you must not talk so. Besides, many of you do not think so meanly of yourselves as you pretend to do when you want to avoid your duty. Do not excuse yourselves through pretended humility. If the Lord bought you with his blood, you are not so insignificant that you can be allowed to deny him your service.

“But coming out and joining a church, and all that, is such an ordeal.” So it may be. In this woman’s case, it was a far greater ordeal than it can be to you. Picture her, with her delicacy of feeling, called into the midst of all that crowd to confess her cure! Ready to sink into the earth! An unclean person who had broken the ceremonial law! How she longed to hide herself away! Yet the tender Lord, for her own sake, would have her stand forth, and what seemed an ordeal became a joy. Jesus does not excuse one of his healed ones from owning the work of his grace. A dear lady, who has long since gone to glory, was once an honoured member of this church: it was Lady Burgoyne, and when she wished to unite with us she said to me, “Dear sir, I cannot go before the church. It is more than I can manage to make a confession of Christ before the members.” I told her that we could make no exception for anybody, and especially not for her, who was so well established in the faith that she could surely answer a few questions before those who were brethren and sisters in the Lord. She came bravely, and spoke most sweetly for her Lord. Some of you may remember her, with her sweet countenance, and venerable bearing. When she had owned her Lord, she put both her hands on mine, and said emphatically, “With all my heart I thank you for this; I shall never be ashamed of Christ now. When aristocratic friends call upon me I will speak to them of my Lord.” She did so constantly. You never found her slow to introduce the gospel, whoever might be with her. She frequently said to me, “Oh, what a training that was for me! I might have been a timid one all my days if I had not made that confession before the church.” Now I say to you, if it be an ordeal, undergo it for Christ’s sake. But, indeed, it should be a pleasure to own your Lord among his own disciples.

“Alas!” says one, “I could not tell of what the Lord has done for me, because mine is such a sorrowful story. You know what I used to be, sir, sovereign grace has made me to differ, but my former life silences me!” Was it not so with this woman? How could she tell her story? But then it was to the glory of God, and so “she told him all the truth.” Whatever you were before you were converted, never boast of it; but at the same time do not deny it, but honour your Saviour. Remember how often Paul tells us what he was before conversion. If any rake up your old sin, answer that it is sadly true, but you have been washed, and much has been forgiven you. Own that you were the chief of sinners, and that even now you are less than the least of all saints, but the Lord has brought you from death to life to the glory of his name.

“I have so little to tell,” says one. That is a good reason why you should tell it, for it will be all the easier for you to do so. He that has little to tell should tell it straight away. I will give you no other answer than that. But still, if you can tell that the Lord Jesus has washed you in his precious blood, I do not think it is a little thing to tell. If you can say, “Whereas I was blind, now I see,” say it, and do not think it a little thing. Once you thought it the greatest fact you could possibly know: think so still. Don’t garnish the story, but state it just as it happened.

“But perhaps people may not believe me.” Did I tell you that

you were to make them believe you? Is that your business? You are to do right, whatever the consequences may be. But they will believe you, if you deserve to be believed. When we meet together as believers, and hear the story of a sinner saved by grace, we are none of us suspicious; sometimes we are a little too quick to believe, and are apt to be deceived. Do not fear that you will be distrusted. Confess your faith at any rate, and God will bless your testimony.

“Ah!” says one, “but suppose after I had confessed Christ I should become as bad as ever.” Suppose that this woman had supposed such a sad thing, and had said, “O Lord I cannot confess that thou hast healed me, for I do not know how I may be in six months’ time.” She was not so mistrustful. “But suppose the Lord should leave me, and suffer me to leave him.” Yes, and suppose you were to leave off supposing anything of the sort, and just take his promise as it stands. “He that believeth in him hath everlasting life.” “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Do you believe his word? Then lay aside such suspicions. Jesus does not give us a trumpery, temporary salvation; he does not save us for a quarter of a year and then leave us. If saved by him, you will be for ever saved! He is the Author of eternal salvation. If he gives you a new heart, it is a new heart, and will never become an old one. If he puts the water of life within you, he does not put it there as you sprinkle the pavement before your shop in the morning, which is soon dried up, but he says, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” When I trusted Christ, I did not trust him to save me for a year or two, but for ever. When you go the heavenly journey, take a ticket all the way through. Some of our friends take a ticket to the next station, and then rush out to get another. Take your ticket for the New Jerusalem, and not for a half-way-house. The train will never break down, and the track will never be torn up. If you can trust Jesus Christ to carry you through to glory, he will do it. Let not that fear disturb you.

“Ah!” says one more, “it seems too good to be true. I cannot think that such a one as I may dare to link myself with the Lord Jesus Christ, who is so great and so glorious.” Yet this is your only hope. You are only saved through being in Christ. This may be too great, too good for us to imagine, but then we need not imagine it; it is clearly revealed in the infallible Word of God. He that believeth in Jesus is one with him. Come, then, and own that blessed oneness.

Be one with Christ to-day in his humiliation, and you shall be one with him by-and-by in his glory. Be despised and ridiculed for his sake, and you shall be honoured and glorified with him in the day when he appeareth. God bless you for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians i.

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HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—424, 674, 671.