

Faith Justifying Speech

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"I believed, therefore have I spoken." [Psalm 116:10](#).

SOME translators render this passage, "I believed, though I have spoken as I have done," for the Psalmist had spoken words suggestive of unbelief. But, although he had spoken unwisely and unbelievably, yet, deep down in his heart, he did still believe in his God. What a mercy it is for us that God does not judge us by our hasty speeches! If He can see only a spark of faith amidst the dense smoke of our unbelief, He accepts it!

We will, however, take the text as we find it in our version—"I believed, therefore have I spoken." To speak what we believe to be false is atrocious. God grant that our lips may never be defiled by the utterance of anything that we do not really believe! To speak what we only think to be true is idle and often mischievous. Many have been grieved and hurt by the repetition of slanders which have passed from mouth to mouth without anyone being able to vouch for their accuracy—and those who repeated them have often done serious injury to the characters of those who were far better than themselves. On the other hand, to know the Truth of God, and not to speak it, is cowardly. The Psalmist did not say, "I believed, and yet I was silent," for that silence might have proved that he was of a cowardly spirit and was afraid that some unpleasant consequences might come upon himself if he dared to deliver unpopular truth. Every speaker is glad enough to say that which will please his auditors and bring credit to himself, but a true man declares what he believes, even though his hearers gnash their teeth at him because of his faithful testimony! To speak what you believe is your duty—to speak what you believe will be likely to benefit those who hear it and to speak what you believe will bring honor and glory to God who taught you the Truth. Therefore say with the Psalmist, "'I believed, therefore have I spoken.' I spoke out with my tongue what I had verified in my inmost soul."

I am going to use the text in three ways. First, as the justification of the Christian minister Secondly, as the argument for Christian profession. And thirdly, as the motive for supplication.

I. First, then, let us consider our text as THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER. "I believed, therefore have I spoken."

No man ever ought to speak in God's name, as a preacher of the Gospel, unless he can say, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." When Paul quoted this verse, he added, "We also believe, and, therefore, speak." And we who preach the Gospel, if we are really sent of God,

believe what we speak in His name. It is a scandal and a shame that there are some ministers who do not believe the doctrines of the church to which they belong, yet they still retain both their position and their pay. I would not consider that I was worthy of the name of an honest man if I took money as the pastor of a Christian Church after I had given up my belief in the Truths I had professed to hold. We hear a great deal, nowadays, about the liberty of ministers to preach what they like, but what about the liberty of the people? Are they not to be considered? Are churches made for ministers, or ministers made for churches? After the people have elected a man to be their pastor, and he changes his views, it is only common honesty that he should say so and no longer pretend to preach what he does not believe, or to belong to a church with which he is not sincerely in sympathy. I cannot imagine a more dreary task than it would be for me to stand here simply to repeat what you wished me to say although my heart did not endorse the words I had to utter! I would never be such a slave as that, but would sooner break stones on the road, or labor at the treadmill in prison!

There are some who do not believe the Bible, but we believe it. There are some who question the great Truths of the faith, but we can lay our hand upon our heart and say that we do not question them. There are some who deny the Deity of Christ and the efficacy of His atoning blood but, as for us, we verily believe them and, therefore, we proclaim them to others. We believe what we speak—and we speak because we believe God has called us to speak. If we could be silent, we would, but we feel that we must preach the Gospel! The man who is sent of God cannot do otherwise than deliver the message that has been given to him—he feels that the fire within him would consume him if he did not let flaming words pour forth from his lips! It was because the Lord had made Ezekiel a watchman unto the house of Israel that he proclaimed his Master's message with such power and unction—and it must be in a similar way that a minister must be to his people as the mouth of God!

Moreover, we believe that the Truths of God we are bid to preach are so important that we cannot be silent concerning them. We believe that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, that God is angry with the wicked every day and that, if men live and die in their sins, they must be cast away from His Presence forever. There may be some of our hearers who will not give heed to our message, but we believe it and, therefore, we speak it. It has become unfashionable to talk of Hell and to mention the wrath to come which is awaiting the ungodly, but fashionable or unfashionable, we cannot keep silent concerning these terrible Truths and we try to use them as Paul did, "Knowing therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." We will not, in unhallowed silence, keep back from sinners a true statement of their present lost condition and of their future awful doom unless they repent of their sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! I have often used as the language of my own heart those solemn lines that John Wesley translated—

"Shall I for fear of feeble man, Your Spirit's course in me restrain? Or undismayed in deed and word, Be a true witness for my Lord? Awed by a mortal's frown, Shall I conceal

the Word of God Most High? How then before You shall I dare To stand, or how Your anger bear? Shall I, to soothe the unholy throng, Soften Your Truths and smooth my tongue? To gain earth's gilded toys, or flee The Cross endured, my God, by Thee? The love of Christ does me constrain To seek the wandering souls of men With cries, entreaties, tears, to save, To snatch them from the fiery wave." There, is, however, more than this that we believe and, therefore, speak. We believe that a great Atonement has been offered for sin, that by His death upon Calvary's Cross, Jesus Christ cleared the channel of Divine Mercy so that now, without injury to His Justice, God can forgive human transgression. Most intensely do we believe, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation." How can we keep silent when we have such good tidings to tell? Accursed would be our lips if we should retain this heavenly secret! We will not do so. We believe and, therefore, do we proclaim to all that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We believe that there is a full and free pardon for every sinner who believes in Jesus, that there is acceptance with God through the righteousness of Christ for every sinner who truly repents and believes, that there is regeneration, that there is adoption into the family of God, that there is salvation here, and eternal glory hereafter, for everyone that believes in Jesus! And believing all this, can we remain silent concerning it? Why, sometimes when a man has made a great discovery, he feels as if he must run down the street, as that old mathematician did, crying, "Eureka! Eureka!" when he had solved the problem that had so long puzzled him. We, too, can cry, "Eureka! Eureka!" for we have found what we long sought in vain! We have found a sovereign balm for every wound, a cordial for all care. We have found that which brings even the dead to life and which will bring to Heaven those who have been lying at Hell's dark door! How can we

keep to ourselves such wondrous discoveries as these? Can we hide in our own heart all that we have learned concerning our blessed Savior? As for me, I say with Charles Wesley—

"My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim
And spread through all the earth abroad,
The honors of Your name."

Further, we speak the Truth of God that has been revealed to us because we believe the preaching of the Gospel will effect great good. We do not preach the Gospel merely because we believe that it may be useful—we preach it because we believe that it must be useful. It is not with us a question whether God will or will not bless the ministry that He has Himself ordained—we believe that He must bless His own Word, for we have His promise that He will do so. "It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and

it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." There is not a true sermon preached beneath the cope of Heaven, whether in a cathedral, or on a village green, that God will not bless, in some way or other, and make it tend to His own Glory. We do not expect this result because of any merit or fitness in our hearers, for they are spiritually like the dry bones that Ezekiel saw in the valley. Our faith is in the Spirit of God to whom we cry even as the Prophet cried, "Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." And the result in our case is the same as it was in his—

"Dry bones are raised, and clothed afresh, And hearts of stone are turned to flesh."

We believe and, therefore, do we speak—and this often accounts for our style of speaking—and sometimes accounts for the faults of it. The man who believes does not always weigh his words, or guard his statements, or speak as coolly and deliberately as others do. They tell us that we sometimes wax too warm. If we do, it is because we believe so fervently the Truths of God that we preach! Some say that, at times, we are harsh and intolerant. But he who believes the Truth cannot be tolerant of the error that would cloud it! Was Elijah too harsh? That is not a question that we need answer— we know that it was because he believed so fully in Jehovah that he could not have any part or lot with the prophets of Baal or the prophets of the groves. He would not have used the popular language of the present day and boasted of his charity to all men, true or false. He knew that as truth is true, a lie is a lie, and is to be treated as a lie, not as though it ought to be welcomed on equal terms with the truth! He believed, and, therefore, he spoke and acted as he did! And, dear Friends, you must not be surprised if we sometimes speak more severely than you think we ought. Intense conviction often carries a man beyond what his hearers might think to be justifiable. I have seen politicians excited and some of their words have been anything but decorous. I have been in the Paris Bourse and have seen how excited the dealers in stocks and shares have been, and how they raged and raved like Bedlamites as prices rose and fell. May other men be excited about gold or government and may we never be excited about God and His Truth, about Heaven and Hell, about the eternal welfare of our own and our fellow creatures' souls? This is our justification—we believe and, therefore, speak— we believe so intensely that we are bound to speak with the accent of conviction!

Luther used to preach like one who had found the grand secret which he must proclaim to others. Some of the things that he said could not be repeated nowadays—they would not at all suit the modern taste—yet he spoke as the times in which he lived needed that he should speak! It must have been grand to hear him, or that other mighty preacher, John Knox, of whom it was said that he was so feeble and so full of pain that as he went up to the pulpit, one might have feared that he would have died before he finished his discourse, yet, before he had proceeded far, so excited did he grow as the Truth of God burned and blazed up in his soul, that it seemed as if the pulpit, itself, would be smashed to pieces with the intense force that he threw into his preaching! Yes, Luther and Knox believed and, therefore,

spoke with an emphasis and a fervor that would be accounted madness in these prim and proper times in which we live! And we would far rather be judged to be as "mad" as they were, than seek to please those to whom truth and lies appear to be of equal value! No, Sirs, you may mark out certain boundaries beyond which you say that we must not go, but we shall leap over them if we can thereby save some! And it is quite possible that our mannerisms and eccentricities, as you call them, will cause a shock to some of your notions of ministerial propriety. If souls are to be saved from going down to the Pit, we must be terribly in earnest even as our Master was. If brands are to be plucked from the burning, we shall not do such work with kid-gloved hands! This generation is so engrossed with its idols and heresies that it will not be called to the living God by

gentle whispering or the lisping of a love-sick maid. We must cry aloud and spare not! We must preach earnestly, intensely and, as some will judge, roughly. And even then, nothing will come of our preaching unless the Spirit of God, Himself, shall accompany it with His own effectual working in the hearts of our hearers. God grant that He may do so!

I must close this part of the subject by saying that when the Psalmist said, "I believed, therefore have I spoken," he meant, "What I spoke, that I believed." And we are prepared to adopt his language and to attach the same meaning to it and also to add that what we have spoken in the past, that we still believe. We have not changed our views, our sentiments, or Doctrines. But do we not pay any tribute to the enlightenment of the age? Are we not to keep pace with the growth of the intelligence of this wonderful 19th Century? Brothers and Sisters, we do not believe in doing anything of the kind! What was true 20 years ago is true, now, and what is true now will be just as true 20 years hence. I once talked with a minister who said to me, "You must find it very easy to preach." I asked him why he thought so, and he replied, "Because you believe a certain set of Truths and you have only to preach them." "Yes," I answered, "it is so, but is not that also the case with you?" "Oh, dear no," he said, "I think my creed out every week. It is constantly changing, for I am so receptive." We are also receptive—not receptive of modern novelties and heresies, nor of the mere fantasies of our own brain, but we are receptive of all that we find in this blessed Book! And that never changes. We may receive new light upon what is in the Word, but the new light will not make that false which was true before the new light came! We hope, when the time comes for us to die, that we shall be able to say, "As we commenced our ministry, so we finish it. Our first sermon was on the same lines as our last. Of course there was a growth in our power of receiving and expounding the Truth of God, but it was the same Truth that we received and that we preached at the first and at the last." The end of our conversion, like that of the Apostle Paul and the faithful preachers of his day, has been, is now and, we trust, by God's Grace, still will be, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

II. Now, secondly, we are to use our text as THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIAN PROFESSION—"I believed, therefore have I spoken."

Brothers and Sisters, true faith in the Gospel is not dumb faith. When a man believes it, he is bound to make an open profession of his belief. What is the Gospel? I will give it to you in our Lord's own Words—"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." There is to be the confession of faith made in Baptism as well as the belief of the Gospel with the heart. Paul thus summarizes "the word of faith" which he preached—"If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." You see how closely the confession of faith is connected with the faith, itself. And the promise of salvation is given at least in these two texts, to the faith that is united with the confession of it. It is the bounden duty of everyone who believes in Jesus to confess that he does so believe. You know how Christ Himself put it—"Whoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess, also, before My Father who is in Heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, (and denying is, in that verse, tantamount to not confessing), him will I also deny before My Father who is in Heaven." You have no right to say, "I am a Believer in Christ, but I do not make a profession of my faith." The profession of your faith is, under the Gospel, just as much your duty as the faith, itself, is! Indeed, I venture to say that true faith necessitates a confession of some sort. If a man believes the great Truths of which I have been speaking, he cannot altogether conceal his belief in them—his conviction of their truth is bound to come out sooner or later—and the sooner it comes out, the better. John Bunyan tells us that when he had found the Savior, he wanted to tell the crows on the plowed land all about it—which is to me an indication of the instinct which moves a man, when he has found Christ, to want to proclaim the good news far and wide!

Besides, this confession of faith is due to the minister whose message has been blessed to his hearers. Should he not be cheered and comforted by hearing that the Word he has preached has been used of God to the salvation of souls? He has more than enough to depress his spirit—ought he not to have anything that he can to encourage him? And what can bring him greater joy than the knowledge that he has not labored in vain, nor spent his strength for nothing?

The confession of faith is also due to the Church with which the convert unites. In the Apostolic days they first gave themselves unto the Lord and then gave themselves unto His people according to the will of God. Why should it not be the same now? How else is the Church to grow? How is it to have new blood put into its veins except concerning the coming forward of the young converts whom the Lord has looked upon in His mercy and saved by His Grace?

The confession of faith is especially due to the Lord who has implanted it in the heart. In these evil days when the enemies of the faith seem to be ashamed of nothing, none of those who are His friends ought to be ashamed of Him. The gage of battle has been thrown

down. Many are massing around the black standard of the Prince of Darkness, so will not all of you who truly love the Prince Emmanuel, rally around His blood-red banner?—

"You that are men, now serve Him,

Against unnumbered foes!

Your courage rise with danger,

And strength to strength oppose." If, indeed, you have been redeemed by His precious blood. If His Spirit has, indeed, regenerated you. And if His Grace is working in your hearts and lives, surely you cannot be so cowardly as to try to conceal yourselves as secret disciples of Christ! To do battle for Jesus is the most honorable service on earth! And, in the great Day of Account, happy shall he be who has bravely borne his part in the great conflict that is now raging between Christ and His Truth and anti-Christ and his lies! Come to the front, Brothers and Sisters! Come to the front! Press forward to that point where the fight is the fiercest, for he is the happiest Christian who can do, and dare, and suffer the most for Jesus Christ, his Lord! Do not, for very shame, conceal your faith if you really believe in Jesus!

Probably the most of you are placed in positions where you are obliged to speak if you are Believers. In the workshop, how much is there of infidelity! In common business life, how much of indifference! In the gayer circles of society, how much of contempt for true religion! And in the coarser circles, how much of vulgar blasphemy! Shame on the man or woman who can live in the midst of worldlings and never let them know that they belong to Christ!

Surely, too, the very fact that you are so often in the company of Christian people ought to make you confess your faith. Even under the old dispensation, "they that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another." And they that truly fear the Lord do the same now. If you are among the God-fearing people of the present day, your speech will betray you. Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ will note your accent, they will perceive that you use their shibboleth, that you have been with Jesus and have learnt of Him. If any of you have received the blessing of salvation through the ministry here, come forward and avow your faith! I do not urge you to do this simply that we may add to our numbers, but as I have already reminded you, this is the reward of our labor which we deserve at your hands. If you have, indeed, passed from death unto life, come out boldly and say so! Though you may be one of the poorer members of the congregation. Though your faith may not be as strong as that of others. Yet if it is genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall rejoice over you and with you with exceeding joy! Whoever you may be, if you are truly trusting in Jesus, "come with us, and we will do you good." When the question rings out in your hearing, "Who is on the Lord's side?" Answer, "I am! I have enlisted among the soldiers of Christ and as I take Him to be my Captain, now, I trust that He will acknowledge me as one of His in the day when the last muster-roll of His troops is called and He gathers them all around Him to share with Him the spoils of His great victory."—

"Stand up! Stand up for Jesus! The strife will not be long. This day the noise of battle, The next the victor's song! To him that overcomes, A crown of life shall be— He with the King of Glory Shall reign eternally!"

III. I can only very briefly refer to the consideration of our text as THE MOTIVE FOR SUPPLICATION. "I believed, therefore have I spoken."

First, I believed in prayer, therefore have I spoken unto God. I did not regard it as a religious luxury, a pious but useless exercise and waste of time, as so many nowadays say that prayer to God is. I believe that as truly as you are listening to me, now, so God listens to me and I can speak to Him and receive answers from Him. That is the way to pray, young man—to speak to God because you believe that He is the hearer and answerer of prayer, for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

I also believed that Jesus Christ was pleading for me. By faith I could see the Man, Christ Jesus, standing before His Father's Throne, with His pierced hands uplifted and presenting my poor prayers to His Father and so making them acceptable through His intercession on my behalf. I believed in Him as the Mediator between God and man and, therefore, I dared to speak to God by virtue of His mediation, though I could not have acceptably approached the Majesty on High in any other way.

I also believed in the Holy Spirit as working in me and teaching me how to pray. The Holy Spirit gave me right desires and helped my infirmities, for I knew not what to pray for as I ought. But because the mind of the Spirit is also the mind of God, I was able, under His gracious guidance, to approach the Throne of Grace acceptably and, therefore, because I believed in the Spirit, therefore have I spoken unto God in prayer—and I have not spoken in vain!

I also believed in God's promise to hear and answer prayer and, therefore, I have spoken unto Him in the full conviction that He would hear and answer me. I believed that every promise that He had given would be kept to the very letter, so I took each promise as I needed it, quoted it when bowing before God in prayer—and then left it with Him, saying, "Lord, do as You have said. Here is Your promise. I believe it, therefore have I spoken it in Your ears. Will You not fulfill this Word unto Your servant, whereon You have caused me to hope?" I believed that God was faithful, so that He would fulfill His promise and that He was willing, so He could fulfill it and grant me all that I needed so long as I could find in His Word a promise adapted to my case.

"I believed, therefore have I spoken." This is the way to pray. An unbelieving prayer asks God for a refusal of its requests. Remember what the Apostle James writes—"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a

wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the

Lord."

If you believe the Bible, speak of it wherever you can. If you believe in Jesus, preach Him to all who are within sound of your voice. If you believe in the Spirit, walk in His might and tell others of that wondrous power. But if you have never believed, may the Lord grant you Grace to believe in Father, Son and Holy Spirit! May He grant you Grace to believe the Bible, Grace to believe the Gospel and then, when you have believed, may you not keep the blessing to yourself, but first make your own personal confession of faith—and then publish far and wide all that has been revealed to you by the Spirit! So shall you be able to say with the Psalmist, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." God grant it, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 116

We have read this Psalm many times. Let us read it now, regarding it not so much as the language of the Psalmist uttered thousands of years ago, but as our own language at this moment.

Verse 1. I love the LORD. Let us go as far as that if we can. Let us, each one, say, "I love the Lord."

1. Because. There is a reason for this love. People say that love is blind, but love to God uses her eyes and can justify herself! "I love the Lord, because"—

1. He has heard my voice and my supplications. [See Sermon #240, Volume 5—PRAYER ANSWERED, LOVE NOURISHED.] Can you go as far as that? Do you recollect answers to prayer when you cried to God with your voice, or when your voice failed you, but supplication rose to God from your heart? Surely there is not a man whose prayers have been answered, who does not love God! He must love the Lord when he recollects what poor prayers his were, what great blessings came in answer to them and how speedily and how often God has heard his prayers and granted his requests!

2. Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live. That is a vow which we may well make and hope for Grace to keep it. It means that as we have succeeded so well in begging at God's door, we will keep on begging of Him as long as we live. I suppose the Psalmist meant that because Jehovah had heard him, therefore he would never call upon any false god but, as long as he lived, he would resort to the one living and true God. I hope that you and I can say the same. We have tried the Fountain of Living Waters—why should we go to broken cis-

terns that can hold no water? Prayer to God has always succeeded—why should we not continue it? All you who have plied the trade of mendicants at the Mercy Seat must have been so enriched by it in your souls that you are determined to stand there as long as you live. "Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I

live." This is sound reasoning, for even the emotions of Believers, when they are most fervent, are based upon solid reasons. We can defend ourselves even when we grow warmest in love to God and most earnest in prayer! Now the Psalmist tells one of his many experiences in prayer—

3. 4. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of Hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the LORD. Dark days are good days for praying. When your eyes cannot see, you pray all the better! When there is no earthly prop to lean upon, you are all the more ready to lean upon God alone! The Psalmist was like a poor worm in a ring of fire—"the sorrows of death compassed me." The sheriff's officer seemed to hold him in his grip—"the pains of Hell got hold upon me." As for his inner experience, he found nothing there but "trouble and sorrow." When the town of Mansoul was besieged, every way of escape was closed except the way upwards—and it was so with the Psalmist and, therefore, he made use of that way! "Then I called upon the name of the Lord." His prayer was short, earnest and full of meaning—

4. O LORD. I beseech You, deliver my soul. [See Sermon #1216, Volume 21—TO SOULS IN AGONY.] He did not have to search for a form of prayer—his words were such as came naturally to his mind—and that is the best sort of prayer which arises out of the heart's sincere desire.

5. Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yes, our God is merciful. The Psalmist was delivered by an act of Grace, yet it was an act of righteousness, for God is not unrighteous to break His own promise, and He has promised to help His people. Grace and righteousness both guarantee answers to believing prayers—and mercy comes in to make assurance doubly sure—"Yes, our God is merciful."

6. The LORD preserves the simple. Straightforward men, those who cannot play a double part, those simpletons whom others take in and laugh at because they are honest, true, genuine—the Lord preserves such people!

6. I was brought low and He helped me. Oh, these blessed personal pronouns! Are you laying hold of them as I read them? Are you speaking them out of your own soul?

7. Return unto your rest, O my soul; for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you [See Sermon #2758, Volume 47—"return

UNTO YOUR REST."] Come home to Him, for you have no other

friend like He in earth or Heaven! Come back to Him, my Soul, and rest where you have often rested before.

8. For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. An eternity of mercies from the Eternal, Himself!

9. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. The best style of living is walking before God, so living in His sight as to be indifferent to the opinions and judgments of our fellow men and only caring to know that God is looking upon us with approval. This is the

way to live! And if we have tried it, we have found it to be so pleasant that we are resolved to continue in it!

10. 11. I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: I said in my haste, All men are liars. They have all failed me. Some of them could but would not help me, so they were as liars to me. Others would but could not, and as I have trusted them, they were as liars to me! But You, my God, are no liar, You are the Truth itself! I ask those of you who have had a very long and varied experience to look back and tell me whether you can recollect even once when your God has broken His promise. You have sometimes been afraid that He would forget it, but has He ever done so? If you speak as you have found Him, you must praise and adore the Faithful, Immutable, All-Sufficient Jehovah who has made your strength to be as your days even to this very hour!

12. What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me? That question contains the essence of true religion. This should be the one objective of our lives if we have been redeemed by Christ and are His servants. Whatever we have done for God, we should endeavor to do much more—and to do it much better.

13. I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. This is a curious way of rendering anything, yet you know that John Newton's hymn says—

"The best return for one like me So wretched and so poor,

Sermon #3200

14-16. I will say my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints. O LORD, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid: You have

a great blessing if we are able to say, as David did, that we are born into God's house. Some of us had gracious mothers who brought us to the Lord in earnest prayer long before we knew anything. I can say to the Lord, "I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid"—and I have no greater wish than that all my descendants may be the Lord's.

17-18. I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD, I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people. Do it, Beloved! Let your hearts pour themselves out in silence, now, and afterwards in grateful song before the Lord. Praise Him, magnify Him, bless His name, "in the presence of all His people." It is inspiring to be with your Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Perhaps the devotion which burns low when there is only one brand on the hearth will burn all the better and brighter when we add many blazing brands to it!

19. In the courts of the LORD'S house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise you the LORD.