

CONCEALING THE WORDS OF GOD

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(On behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society).

*"I have not concealed the Words of the Holy One."
Job 6:10.*

JOB'S dire distress was aggravated by the remarks of his friends. Eliphaz the Temanite opened fire against him in such words as these—"Behold, you have instructed many and you have strengthened the weak hands. Your words have upheld him that was falling and you have strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon you and you faint; it touches you, and you are troubled." As much as to say, you can preach but you cannot practice. Where are your sermons and advice to others now? It was a shameful thing to throw in the good man's teeth his testimonies in former days, but Job, who under all his sorrow always retained his clearness of intellect and singular shrewdness, took the words of Eliphaz and used them for his own comfort.

They were bread and meat to him, though brought in a raven's mouth. "Yes," he said, "I have comforted many and my words have instructed the ignorant and strengthened the feeble, and this is so much my comfort in the hour of my affliction that I dare even ask God to let loose His hand upon me and end my life. Let Him not spare me, for I have the testimony of my conscience that I have not been disloyal to my God. The taunt of my accuser proves that I have not concealed the Words of the Holy One."

It is always well to be able to turn the enemy's guns upon him and to extract comfort from that which was meant to grieve us. Job made no idle boast when he said that he had not concealed the Words of the Holy One, for we know from his history that he had been a bold confessor of the Truth of God. We are informed that he was carefully watchful as to his own family that the Words of the Holy One should be there esteemed and known, especially that grandest of all holy Words concerning sacrifice and atonement, for we read that when his children had kept birthdays at each other's houses and had fulfilled their days of feasting, "Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."

He was earnest for the purity of his family and the keeping up of the sacrifices which were typical of the cleansing of sin—and thus he made known to his descendants the central Word of all the Words of the Holy One. Even in the time of his affliction the Patriarch had not spoken other than according to the mind of God. What said he when he had lost all his possessions and was left without a child? "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there: the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord." And when his wife, seeing him covered with a loathsome disease, bade him curse God and die, he did not withhold his testimony from her, but said, "What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

These were words given him of the Lord in the moment of his need and he shunned not to utter them with all his heart! The Inspired Testimony about this holy man is that, "in all this did not Job sin with his lips." It is clear that in his prosperity Job was a most faithful witness for God. We will not speculate about the time or the place in which he lived, but wherever he lived, he was a man of great influence and was held in high esteem. He says, "When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street, the young men saw me and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking and laid their hand on their mouth."

This influence was always exerted for the cause of truth and righteousness, which is always the cause of God. In the 29th chapter he says of himself, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him

that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem." He was thus, by his conduct, a perpetual protest against sin; a continued proclamation of justice, righteousness, mercy and love in the age in which he lived. And he could, therefore, say without any word of egotism, "I have not concealed the Words of the Holy One."

This was now a comfort to him when all other comforts failed—he knew that his affliction was not the fruit of a treacherous departure from God, or a cowardly concealment of his faith. He felt that he could face death and even long for it because he had been loyal to his God and faithful to the light which had been given him from on high. It was not self-righteousness which led Job to speak thus, but only such a use of the sure evidences of Grace as would be natural and proper in any godly man in the hour of his extremity. It is the nature of obedience to yield peace to the heart and no one can be blamed for enjoying that peace. It cannot be wrong for our consciences to bear testimony to the sincerity and purity of our lives, nor wrong that when our hearts condemn us not, we have confidence towards God.

He who is most undivided in his faith in Jesus may, nevertheless, derive comfort from having been enabled to be loyal to his God. Did not Paul bless God for much the same faithfulness as Job claimed when he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"? Happy shall he be who has a clear testimony within his soul that he has declared the Truth of God in all honesty and earnestness, even to the end. Job had not refrained from an *open confession* of his own faith in God—he had been known in the gates of the city as a worshipper of the Lord, a perfect and an upright man—one that feared God and eschewed evil. He had never hidden his faith, but had acknowledged one God whom he here calls the *Holy One*.

While many gods and lords divided the fealty of nations, Job was true to the one only God and believed His Words as they were revealed to him. Nor was he content with an open confession of his own faith. Job had made a continued *communication* of what he knew to others. He had taught his family—there *all* teaching should begin. He had taught his fellow citizens by his example—the most powerful of all teaching. Never had he wandered into idolatry, or worshipped the sun when it shined, or kissed his hand to the queen of heaven, but, on the contrary, he had avowed the one and only Lord without fear. He asks, "Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me that I kept silence?" So faithful had he been that he cries, "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know my integrity." This was high ground to take, but it evidently strengthened the good man's heart to bear his troubles and it will do the same for us if we can win the same witness from our consciences.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, this is a comfort we ought to seek. It should be our care that when we come to die, we may not have to cry, "I was ashamed of Jesus and now I shall find Him ashamed of me! I hid His Truth in unrighteousness, wrapping my talent in a napkin! What shall I do, or where shall I turn? A servant unfaithful to His trust, I have to give an account of my stewardship and I cannot do it! Woe is me!" God grant that we may be able to say with Job, "I have not concealed the Words of the Holy One."

Many professors will greatly need to alter their ways, or they will be covered with confusion in the Day of the Lord. Blessed and holy is he who can declare with David, or rather with David's son, "I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth from the great congregation" (Psa. 40:10). We have more of the Words of the Holy One than Job had and should, therefore, be the more anxious to make them known. I suppose he had no Inspired Book to read—he could not have had any more than the Books of Moses and probably he had not those—but the Lord spoke to him as He often spoke to the Prophets in the olden time and he had also learned those Truths of God which had been handed down from the earliest days from father to son.

Now we have a vast mass of sacred literature and we have, besides that, the Word Himself, who is the hope of our souls and the Lord of our hearts! O Brethren, if we wickedly hide what God has revealed to us, we shall be veiling a great light and we shall heap up guilt like the hills! When we come to die, we shall feel a misery proportionate to the enormity of our crime—we shall be tortured with agonizing thoughts for having, as far as we were able, quenched the Spirit and blotted out the testimony of the Most High! God forbid that we should be guilty of such an enormity!

Job, according to the language of our text, evidently had a great reverence for every Word of the Lord. He would not have used that term, "the Holy One," if he had not felt the holiness of the Words, themselves, and if he had not stood in solemn awe of Him who spoke them. He felt that they must not be concealed, because the Words of the Holy One

should have free course and be published abroad. Should not the word of a king be circulated through the length and breadth of his dominions? Have you and I such a reverence for every revealed Truth of God? Do we stand in awe of every Word of God? If we do, it will be well for us if we practically express our homage after the fashion of David, who said, "With my lips have I declared all the judgments of Your mouth."

The words which God speaks are uttered that *we* may speak them! It is the best homage to a word to hear it and to repeat it. Let us proclaim God's Words abroad—they are light and are not meant to be hidden! Such candles ought never to be put under a bushel. To hide the Divine Words would be a great sin against the Most High—and to warn you against it will be the aim of this morning's discourse. I shall speak with the earnest prayer that both to myself and to each one of you there may be a personal voice from God stirring every conscience as to this matter and making each one of us enquire whether or not we, also, can say, "I have not concealed the Words of the Holy One."

We shall divide our subject thus. First, we shall have a little to say about *the sin to be avoided*. Then we will give some strong *arguments for avoiding it*. And, thirdly, suggest some *methods by which we may be enabled to avoid it*.

I. Here is A SIN TO BE AVOIDED, concealing the Words of the Holy One. Now, we can conceal those words *from ourselves* as well as from others. "How can we conceal them from ourselves?" you ask. I think that very great stress must be laid upon this form of the evil which lies at the root of the second shape of it. We can conceal the Word of God from ourselves in many ways. The Law of God speaks with a searching and threatening voice—it tells us of our sin, it forewarns us of the punishment—and it sets our danger, both present and future, before our mind's eyes.

But there are thousands of persons who never give the Law an opportunity of being heard in their hearts—they turn a deaf ear to anything which is unpleasant to them—they do not like to face the honest Truth of God. You know why this is. Why doesn't a man who is bankrupt in business take any pleasure in his books? Why is it that he postpones all settlements and endeavors to forget his affairs? Is it not because his ruin is near at hand? If there is any Truth of God, my Friend, that you are afraid of, you have cause to be afraid of it! But let me forewarn you that there is no escaping from a fact by endeavoring to forget it!

Every honest man, every brave man, every man who is truly a man, would like to face his true condition and see what and where he is. One of the prayers which I commend to your frequent use is this, "Lord, let me know the very worst of my case that I may not be living upon vain pretensions and may not be pluming myself with being in a happy condition while all the while I am in awful danger." Let it never be said of any one of you that you concealed the Words of the Holy One about yourselves by refusing to feel their force lest they should end the flattering visions of your fond conceit! Love the Truth of God even though it cuts you to the quick. Ask God to search you and try you and to make you sensible of sin and of judgment to come—this is the part of honesty and common sense. You will be foolish, indeed, if you conceal the Words of the Holy One from your conscience and so flatter your soul into destruction.

Others conceal the Gospel Word, that Word which speaks of the free gift of pardoning mercy, which is of many offenses unto justification. They go about to find out some way of their own for self-salvation and do not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. Beloved, pray the Lord to help you to know the Gospel thoroughly and to understand its glorious simplicity, its sweet freeness and boundless fullness! Do not put out the light which, alone, can lead you to eternal life! Do not shut your eyes to the Divine Lamp—do not conceal from yourselves those humbling but yet soul-saving doctrines which make for your souls eternal peace! Shut not against yourselves the one gate of Paradise. Hide the Gospel in your heart, by all means, but hide it not *from* your heart, lest you sin against your own soul.

I ought, also, to warn every Christian here of concealing any of the Words of God from himself, by accepting half the Truth of God and rejecting the rest. Receive *the whole of Revelation*. Some professors have favorite texts and choice portions of Scripture—and they regard other parts of the Word with aversion—avoiding them as much as possible because they do not agree with their system of divinity and need much squaring before they will fit in with their foregone conclusions! They do not read such passages, or they read them carelessly, or a commentator is sought out who, by the exercise of much ingenuity, will impute another meaning than the true one to the Words of God.

Brothers and Sisters, open your souls to Divine Light! Give the Word of God free admittance into your spirits! Lay no embargo upon any form of the Truth of God! Demand no toll for the commodities of Heaven. Let your mind be an open port, carrying on a free trade in the treasures of the Gospel. Believe whatever God says, because God says it, though you may not always see its why and wherefore or perceive its internal consistency. Be prepared and even anxious to know

the whole Truth of God as far as you can know it and let it pervade your entire being with its holy influence. It will be a terrible thing if one of these days you shall have to say, "I rejected a great Truth of God. I had a suspicion that it was so, but I did not wish to believe it and so I shut my ears to its evidence. I had a leaning towards the opposite view and I felt committed to it and so refused to change." Open both your eyes, my Brothers and Sisters. If you cannot see everything, yet see all you can see and pray the Lord to take each scale away that you may know all the Truth and so the Truth may make you wholly free.

There is, again, a concealing of the Truth from ourselves in one other respect, namely, when we try to avoid the Word of command. There are some professed Christians of peculiar doctrinal opinions to whom the word, "duty," is something dreadful and if the preacher dwells upon Gospel *precepts* they call him, "legal." I am not much in awe of that word, myself, for being interpreted it means, lawful, and none of us would like to be *unlawful* preachers. These folks insinuate that the preaching of the practical precepts of the Gospel is in conflict with the Grace of God and is little better than preaching up human merit! Whereas the doctrine of God our Savior is always a doctrine according to *holiness* and good works are the sure *results* of true faith.

True Gospel preaching does not decry holy living! No, it sets up the highest possible standard and declares the way to reach it! Beware of picking and choosing in reference to the commands of Christ! Some professors object to much of the teaching of Him whom they call Master and Lord. The forgiving of injuries as we hope to be forgiven; the non-resistance principle of turning the other cheek when one is struck—these are very objectionable to ordinary religionists. Such precepts are denounced as impracticable and it is asserted that they cannot be carried out. Doing unto others as you would that they should do to you is regarded as a golden precept for other people to practice towards our dear selves, but not at all a practical maxim from us to the general public!

When persons speak of our Lord's precepts as good but impracticable, they make Him out to be an amiable simpleton! Is this their reverence for the Incarnate Wisdom? I need not stop to quote examples, but there are many such things in the Word of God as precepts which good men decline to see, which, indeed, they declare that they *cannot* see! If you put a gold piece over the boldest printed verse in the Bible you will not be able to see the passage—and there are some whose profits in business, whose position in life, above all, whose "respectability" will not allow them to see certain precepts and so they do not see them and they pass through life without obeying the most plain commands of the Lord! I pray you do not do so, for willful ignorance is no excuse for *disobedience*.

It is written, "He that knew his master's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." And, mark you, he that did *not* know his master's will, but might have known it and deliberately declined to know it, shall take his place with those who bear the *heavier* punishment! The plea of ignorance will be of no use to such persons except it is to make them also take their place with the man who receives the few stripes and so they shall partake in both the greater and the lesser scourging, inasmuch as they are worthy to range with both kinds of offenders! Try to know what God would have you do and pray that by His Holy Spirit, when you know it, you may put it into speedy and cheerful practice and this shall be a comfort to you.

Still, the point I want to bring out is that the holy man in our text *had not concealed God's Truth from others*. We can do this in many ways. We can conceal the Words of the Holy One by *not confessing the Truth of God at all*. A Christian, but he never said so! He hid himself along with Joseph of Arimathea, although he never offered his new tomb to his Lord. He justified himself by the example of Nicodemus, though he never brought spices for his Lord's burial! There was a time when there might be secret disciples of Christ, but that was before the Cross was lifted up! It is written, concerning our Lord's death, that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed by it and now Christ's followers follow Him openly. I should not like to be among those who expect to slink into Heaven by a back door some dark night and intend never to disclose themselves till they throw off the mask and stand before the wondering eyes of angels!

Christians who passed through the world disguised as unregenerate men? No, no! Our Lord has said, "He that confesses Me before men, him will I confess. But he that denies Me, him will I deny." Do not run risks upon that score! If you love the Lord, say so! If you expect Him to acknowledge you, acknowledge Him. We may conceal the Words of the Holy One, although we have made an open confession, by a *sinful silence* about the Gospel towards others. I am afraid I would not be too censorious if I said that there are many professors of religion who never talk of Christ to others and never seek the salvation of anybody.

Are there any such people here in this gallery, or down below in this area? You have found a medicine which has healed your soul, but you never mention it to the thousands who are sick around you? You have not even named it to your own children? Can such cruelty be possible? Where do you sit? Are you there? No, good people, do not move away from him! I hope he still has something human about him, though certainly not much that is *humane*. You were hungry and you have found bread and you have eaten it—and yet though thousands are around you perishing with hunger, you have no pity on them? Many loaves are in your stores at home, but you spare none for these starving ones! You eat your morsel alone and all the while thousands are dying outside your window, yes, they are perishing by the millions. Do you care nothing for their woes? Are you a man or a demon? The Lord have mercy upon you! I will say no more than this, for I think I need not prove that it must be an atrocious sin for a man to know the Words of the Holy One and not to make them known to others. This sin is easily committed by a silence which pleads modesty, but which ought to confess to cowardice—therefore be aware of the cheat!

Some who speak often, nevertheless conceal the Words of the Lord by *their own words*. The Roman Catholic Church stands convicted of concealing the Words of the Holy One by the use of the Latin tongue in the daily service. Whatever there is of good in the “mass,” ought to be spoken in such language that everybody can understand and receive it. But instead, the people stand and look on and know not what is being done! And if there is anything that might edify and instruct, they are not cognizant of it because it is hidden from them by words unknown to them.

Protestant! You condemn this practice, but are not many of you as guilty yourselves? Did you listen to that splendid sermon? What rhetoric! What oratory! But those poor people in the aisles did not understand a word, or if they did, they only comprehended disconnected sentences and lost the soul of the discourse. Is this right? Is this according to the Scriptural idea of preaching? “Oh, but,” you say, “the great man does not preach to that class of people.” But His Master did and He bade men take note that in the Gospel dispensation the poor have the Gospel preached unto them! He would have His ministers preach so that they can be understood of *all* men! It is a pity when you hang the Cross with your artificial flowers until you hide the wounds of Christ. Down, down, down with all your tawdry rhetoric! Your so-called eloquence deserves a *curse* since it robs the simple of a blessing! Few things have so much damaged the Church of God as “the wisdom of words.” A sweet and solemn simplicity which a child can comprehend is after the fashion of our Master, therefore let us aim at it. When you talk about Jesus Christ, make your speech very plain, lest under the ornaments of your language you should conceal the Words of the Holy One.

The thing can be done, again, by clouding the Truth of God with *error*. There is such a thing as laying a substratum of the Truth of God and then overlaying it with human opinions, after the manner of the boastful school of modern thought whose novelties are set before us as the matured fruit of the culture of the 19th Century—this also is concealing the Words of the Holy One! You may, perhaps, have seen ancient parchments containing words of holy Writ which have been covered over and then re-written with popish legends—these *palimpsests* (that is their technical name) are the types and symbols of the discourses of the philosophical divines of the school of *culture*. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is hidden by their so-called “thought”—their *own* thoughts are set before the thoughts of God! What shall we say to such thinking but that it is a presumptuous setting up of human intellect above the Revelation of the Lord? What shall we say of such culture but that it cultivates a pride which had better have been cut up by the roots? It conceals the Words of the Holy One that fallible man may sit upon the throne of wisdom and make his own religion and be his own god!

We may yet further conceal the Words of God by an inconsistent life. You have often heard it said that the worldling does not read his Bible, but he reads professing Christians—he never troubles to read a chapter, but he reads his godly relatives. Many a man has found Christ through reading some dear and venerated mother whose living and dying experience has been God’s testimony to his soul. See, then, if our lives are crooked, perverse, unkind, ungenerous, unholy, selfish, un-Christly—we conceal the Words of God—for men will not read a true Gospel in us, nor have a true idea of our religion. They will not care to hear a Gospel which produces such characters as ourselves, if those characters are unlovely.

Men lay all our *faults* at the door of our Master and thus we crucify Him afresh. They say, “That is your religion,” though they must know better. They will always say so, for after this manner the enemies of God have always gloried over Israel. He who lives not after a godly and holy sort is guilty of concealing the Words of the Holy One in the most injurious manner. Let us all try to avoid this sin because it is contrary to the practical genius of Christianity which

commands godly men to shine as lights in the world. Sinful silence, as to the blessed Word of Grace, is rebellion against our Lord's last command—"Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Therefore, be not chargeable with so grave a crime.

II. In the second place we will give a mere outline of the ARGUMENTS FOR AVOIDING THIS SIN. The subject is weighty and deserves a longer consideration, but time compels me to condense. And first, the man who conceals the Word of God is out of order with God. God speaks that He may be heard and that His mind may be known. The evident design of *words* is to make known the speaker's mind. To run parallel with God's wish, therefore, is to give His Words free course to the ends of the earth.

O you who profess to be a child of God, will you run counter to the design of the Most High? And when He speaks, will you, by concealing His Words, make Him to be as though He spoke not? Such a silence is out of gear with the whole course of Nature. "The heavens are telling the Glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork: day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge." The whole Creation, after its own inarticulate manner, proclaims its Maker and Preserver! Rocks find a voice and waters have a tongue. Stars sing by shining and darkness preaches by its solemnity. Should man, alone, be dumb? God forbid that he should be Creation's silent chord when every other string is vibrating with praise! No, let us pray the Holy Spirit to put us into order with God and with His universe—and let us no more conceal His Words!

If you wish to see the sin of concealing the Gospel, think of the consequences which would have followed if others had done so. If the Apostles had never risked their lives to preach, what had the nations been? If martyrs had never yielded their blood in testimony, would not thick darkness have brooded over the nations? Imagine the consequences, if you can, if Luther had taken the advice of his godly but timid friend, when he said, "Get to your cell and pray: meddle not with things too high for you." Imagine what history would have been if Wycliffe, Tyndal, Calvin, Zwingli and all those lights of the world had hidden themselves through cowardice! They would have been guilty, but we would have been miserable!

Now, what would have been criminal in them must be evil in us, also, in proportion to our degree. We owe it to coming generations that we pass on the torch of the Truth of God as it has been handed down to us. Let us not be unfaithful to our trust. If we conceal the Words of the Holy One, we shall evidently err because the motive for so doing can hardly be supposed to be other than sinful. If we conceal God's Truth, it will probably be out of cowardice—and to be a coward under the command of such a Captain as ours is treason! Probably self-love will be the ruling motive, but we are told expressly that he who loves his life shall lose it and that Christ is to be better loved than life itself.

Those who do not love the Word of God are often moved by pride which cannot stoop to be despised. Or fear which dreads ridicule, or love of the world which seeks the applause of men. Is it not atrocious ingratitude to Him who was derided and spit upon for our sakes if we hide His glory to escape from shame? I feel it difficult to conceive an argument for concealing God's Word which would hold water for a single moment! Certainly I can invent none which will bear the test of the great trial to which we all must come. If, then, the motive of such concealment is evil, it must, itself, be evil.

I have already hinted that common humanity requires that if we have received the precious Truth of God, we should not conceal it. I feel as if your natures responded to the remark and that I needed not again enforce it, having done so already. If you love men; if you would make them happy here; if you would save them from perishing hereafter, I beseech you make known to them with holy earnestness the way of salvation contained in the Words of the Holy One! For if not, let it be known that all the results of concealment will be chargeable against you! If the next generation should become more wicked than the present and still more ignorant of the Gospel, the fact will be chargeable upon those who conceal the Words of God today!

If the masses, through not knowing the Gospel, reject it and continue in their sin, the calamity and crime will be charged upon those dumb lips which never speak of Jesus! If sinners sink to Hell, passing out of this world unsaved and they have come into contact with Christian men who gave them no warning, on whose hands will their blood be found? Yes, more—remember that even if sinners are saved by some other agency it does not exonerate those who neglected to warn them—for since the silence naturally tended to destruction, those who were guilty of it shall be judged as if the uninstructed were destroyed even though, by God's interposition, it is not so! If the natural result of any line of conduct

is prevented by Divine interference, its criminality is by no means lessened. The conduct itself may be judged by what it would naturally result in if it were left to itself.

Many a man has been guilty of murder who, nevertheless, did not actually spill his fellow's blood because he did that which he knew *would* kill. And it is no praise of his that death did not come of it. So, if a corrupt, unholy silence would slay a soul, even though that soul is saved, the wickedly silent one is guilty of soul murder all the same. You are shifting uneasily in your seats, some of you—this is a good sign—for many might do so without being too sensitive. How again, dear Friends, can any man prove his loyalty to his God or his likeness to the Savior if he continues to conceal the Words of the Holy One? What can you do for God but obey Him? And when He speaks to you, you must gladly make known to others the Truth which has sounded in your ears!

How can you be like Jesus, your professed Master, if you have no witness to bear for the good of men? He went about doing good. His life was transparent. He wore the Gospel on His sleeve, spoke it with His eyes and revealed it in His daily life! How can you be like He if you smuggle away the Gospel as if it were contraband to be hidden away from all eyes? How can you bury the priceless Truth of God like a miser who hoards up his cankered gold? Tell all the heavenly message! Tell it all around! Tell it so long as you have a voice! If you are a true servant of God, you can not stifle the voice of Jesus, who, out of Heaven cries to the sons of men!

Now, think once more and we shall see the sinfulness of the conduct we denounce. What will it be to meditate upon your dying bed of having known the Truth of God, but having never, in any way, assisted to spread it? What will it be to die with eternity just before you and to reflect, "I have been a member of a Church many years, but I have never brought in a single convert. I sat in my pew and I knew the Divine Secret, but I never even told a child of it. Neither by pen nor tongue did I make Jesus known. I left that to the minister. I knew there were good people about who cared for men's souls, but I had no such feeling—I kept myself to myself and felt no anxiety about my neighbors. I had very little care as to whether souls were saved or not. I was glad when I heard of an increase in the Church, but not very particularly so. I was rather sorry when things were down—not so sorry that I lost my appetite, or lay awake 10 minutes. I did not trouble myself more than I could help, for I was foolish enough to dream that the best thing I could do was to consult my own interests and I fancied that my chief end was to enjoy myself forever."

Now, I can imagine such a person sorely beset with horrors when he comes to die and struggling hard to get anything like a glimpse of hope. His whole life has been that of selfishness—how can he be a Christian? Conscience will ask him, "Is this Christ-like, this keeping back of the Divine Bread from the perishing millions; this concealing of the Light of God? Surely you are no follower of the Crucified!" How will such conduct look at the Last Great Day? The Lord Jesus will say to some, "I was hungry and you gave Me no meat: I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink." Now mark, these sentences refer to *temporal* bread and water, but they must be more emphatic, still, when they relate to *spiritual* things! If the Lord Jesus shall say, "There were hungering souls and you professed to know the Gospel, but you gave them no meat. There were thirsty souls and you professed to have drunk of the Water of Life and you gave them no drink," can there be any answer? Will not such persons stand speechless—dumbly confessing the justice of the sentence, "Depart, you cursed"?

III. I shall close by mentioning one or two METHODS BY WHICH WE MAY AVOID THIS SIN. I am speaking, now, to you who have believed in Jesus and are truly His own disciples. First, take care that you make an open profession of your faith. Come out from the world and unite with the people of God. If you do not make a profession, I do not see how you can be found innocent of the charge of concealing the Lord's Words. When you have done that, keep yourself clear of sinful silence by very often speaking to others of the things of God.

I was greatly pleased this week when a Brother minister said to me, "A man has just joined our Church; a rough man who mixed in company that was not likely much to improve him and yet he has been really made a new man. He was accustomed to go round to houses with small casks of beer for a large brewery and among the rest he called at a certain house where the servant is a member at the Tabernacle. She had not seen him more than once or twice before she began to ask him whether he knew the Savior and to question him about his soul. And when he called each month she spoke to him, again, till at last he who had never thought of religion, nor entered a place of worship at all, was brought to the feet of Jesus and has become an honor to the Church of which he is a member."

This minister said, “I hope all your members do as that servant does.” I told him I knew a great many of you did, but no doubt some of you did not. You who do not, may well fidget upon your seats as you take home the hint! From now on, at every opportunity speak of Jesus to those around you, lest you be found guilty of concealing the Words of the Holy One! Some of you cannot *speak* very much because you are naturally diffident and slow of speech. Try and overcome the infirmity, but if you cannot do so, do not conceal the Words of the Most High on that account, but *write letters* of personal entreaty. You can do this, can’t you? Some of you can write very well, indeed, and you write so much that it is much easier for you to write than for friends to read! As you can write so well, write for Jesus Christ—write earnestly and lovingly for Jesus!

You can also circulate what has been written by other people, though I do not think it so good a thing to do as writing, yourself. You may send tracts and sermons, but let them be such as you may hope that people will read. Sometimes you may write out part of a tract and it will attract them all the more for being your own handwriting. Another thing may be done. If you feel that when you have spoken and written you have still not done much, help other people who have greater gifts. A great deal may be done by imitating Aquila and Priscilla who helped Apollos. It is not given to everybody to preach to large numbers, or to preach at all—but you can often pick out a young man and say, “I will help him in his education and encourage him in his first efforts.” You can always help young men by filling the offering box, which supports the College. [Seminary.]

I married a gentleman on this platform, some time ago, who said to me, “I wish I could preach, but I will tell you what I will do. I will support a man to preach—I will find the money and you will find the man.” I told him I must have him speak, too, as best he could. He said he would, but he wished to have somebody to speak better. Men of wealth should copy this example. Help the tract distributors, help the city missionaries, help all those who publish the Word of the Lord! [If the Holy Spirit is thus burdening you, a great print/audio ministry is Mt. Zion Publications, a ministry of Mt. Zion Bible Church, in Pensacola, Florida. Write them at 2603 W. Wright St., Pensacola, FL 32505, USA.]

And lastly, and this morning most to the point, there are the heathen perishing for lack of knowledge. Millions of voices call out of the darkness to you, “Come over and help us! You have the Light of God, bring it to us! You have the Living Bread, come and feed us! We perish, we perish, we perish.” Brothers and Sisters, the heathen are perishing! Will you let them perish? I wish that some young men here would go for missionaries. One of the leaders of a missionary society cheered my heart last week when he took out of his pocket an old sermon of mine, marked and crossed and scored. He said, “You will like to see that, Mr. Spurgeon.” “What about it?” I asked. “That was given to me by a young man who has joined our mission. He read that sermon and marked the passages which touched his heart and now he is at work in China.

I looked upon that sermon with great delight! I think I felt more pleased with that old sermon *than if I had received a wreath of gold*. I felt gratified that I had brought a young and fervent heart to devote itself to the Lord Jesus Christ. Give me the same joy, each of you! And if you cannot go among the heathen, personally, help others to do so! Give, this morning, a liberal collection and may God accept it at your hands for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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