

SPEAKING ON GOD'S BEHALF NO. 3543

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1916
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*“I have yet to speak on God’s behalf.”
Job 36:2*

SO said Elihu. And verily many of us might make the same resolve. We have tasted that the Lord is gracious. When first we came to Him laden with guilt and full of woes, we found Him ready to pardon—a God with whom there is plenteous redemption.

*“Many days have passed since then,
Many changes have we seen.”*

Still, we have the same tale to tell. God has been faithful to us under all circumstances. He has passed by our backslidings, He has been patient with all of our shortcomings, and He has borne with our waywardness. To this day His kindness has not abated, His promise has not been forfeited, and His covenant is unbroken, it has never failed us. In bounden duty, yet with cheerful gratitude, we are compelled to say that the Lord is good, and His mercy endures forever. On God’s behalf, then, we will speak. Much reason have we to do so.

While the world is scoffing or despising, while some are doubting and others are blaspheming, while idolatry and infidelity have their respective champions, we will offer our personal testimony in the teeth of all the Lord’s adversaries. Blessed be His name, He is a faithful and true God, and if all the dwellers on earth should belie and forsake Him, His love binds us fast. We cannot, neither will we, let our trust in Him be displaced or our witness to Him be silenced.

It seems to me that the chief business of a Christian while here below is to speak on God’s behalf. Why is he placed here? Lower ends or meaner objectives do not appear to me to resolve that question. Merely to work, to toil, to fulfill his days as a hireling, in common with the rest of his fellow creatures, were a poor account to give of a pilgrim to the heavenly city bound. Is he not allowed to tarry here that he may glorify his God by speaking on His behalf? Are we not, each one of us, appointed to linger in these lowlands, that we may personally bear witness to what we have heard and seen, tasted and handled, tested and proved to be true of the good Word of Life?

This sacred obligation may be very heart searching to some of you. I am afraid there are dumb tongues that do not speak on God’s behalf, and which of us can escape a sharp rebuke on this score? For those of us who do speak, speak not as we should, we are not always giving such evidence, and bearing such witness as well becomes us on God’s behalf.

I purpose this evening to mention *some of the occasions on which we have yet to speak on God’s behalf, some prevalent excuses for silence, some imperative reasons for bearing testimony, and some pointed suggestions to those who feel constrained to open their mouth boldly for the honor of God.* To my mind, it seems obvious that—

I. THERE ARE CERTAIN OCCASIONS WHEN EVERY SAVED ONE SHOULD SPEAK ON GOD’S BEHALF.

Is it not peculiarly incumbent upon us *immediately after we have found peace by putting our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ?* He that believes with his heart is bound, according to the Gospel rule, to confess also with his mouth. Have you heard the good tidings, the way of salvation, yourself, and believed it,

and received the fullness of its blessing? Then you are forbidden to hide your light under a bushel, you are admonished to let it be seen by all that are in the house. You are not, as a coward, to conceal your allegiance to your Lord, but you are, as a warrior, to put on the King's livery, enter the ranks, and join with the rest of His people.

Is not this the message we are told to circulate, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"? Should you not, therefore, avow your faith and confess your Lord in baptism, then, having believed His Word and obeyed His precept, take up His cross as one who is dead and buried with Him in the outward type and symbol, to follow henceforth wherever He leads.

This seems to me, as I read the Word of God, to have been the course with all the early Christians. They believed and were baptized. They did not postpone or procrastinate, but no sooner were they Christians than they confessed their Christianity in baptism. And why is it not so now? Would God that His people would come back to the simple methods of the early churches, and feel that, being saved, their next business is to give the answer of a good conscience toward God, speaking thus on His behalf, and avowing themselves to be the Lord's people.

This is but a fitting preface to a life of testimony. The whole of a Christian's career should be vocal with spiritual power. By the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit within him, he should ring out, as it were, in silver notes, through all his conversation, both in the church and in the world, a goodly, gracious, grateful testimony—"I have yet to speak on God's behalf. Even if I have spoken for the last twenty years, it becomes me yet to speak on God's behalf." I may be grey-headed, I may lean upon my staff, I may come near the bounds of man's short span on this poor stage, "I have yet to speak on God's behalf."

Even when pillows stay up my aching head, and when my flesh and my heart are failing—until the pulse of life shall flag, and the power of speech shall fail, our witness to the sons of men must never falter, much less must it come to an ignoble end. "I have yet to speak."

When first I knew Him, I was compelled to speak. Would that every converted man was moved instantly to avow his Lord. But if we have aught to regret in the past, let us not be hesitant now. Say it, resolve it, ay, vow it. I have and I shall have *yet* to speak on God's behalf till speech shall fail me, till, dying, "I clasp my Savior in my arms, the antidote of death."

And oh! how specially bound the Christian is to speak on God's behalf *when he is cast among ungodly men and women!* There may be in the house where you live no lover of Jesus except yourself. Take care that your conversation makes the rest know that you have been with Jesus and have learned of Him. There is no other candle in the house, oh! put not the extinguisher on that one. You are the only salt, take care that you be sprinkled over the mass.

Let the savor of your walk and conversation be diffused among your associates. At times the name of Christ will be blasphemed, perhaps, in your presence, or it may be, unholy and even lewd conversation will assail your ears. It is for you to express your displeasure at anything which is displeasing to Him you serve. You must put in a word, though you do but feebly thrust it in edgeways, for the Christ whom ungodly tongues are slandering. You may not sit still and hear your best friend evil spoken of, that were ungrateful in the extreme.

Well might He say, "Is this your kindness to your friend?" Should you smile, they will think you are amused, but if you laugh with them over an unholy jest, they would say you enjoyed it. "Thou also wast as one of them" was a charge made against a professor. Oh! let it never be laid against any of us. If we see our neighbor sin, and rebuke him not when the opportunity offers, we become partakers in his sin. Remember this, on such occasions it is our bounden duty to speak on God's behalf.

Yet again, we meet *with brethren in affliction*. They are mourning and bemoaning themselves and their hardships. God's own people commonly find that in all their trials they are beset with temptations. How apt they are to speak unadvisedly because they think untowardly of the order of God's providence and the manner of His love! I wish this ill condition of the heart and this bad habit of the lips were less prevalent than unhappily it is. They talk as if they served a hard Master, and they murmur as if His

providence were peculiarly severe towards them. I beseech you, seize the propitious moment to speak on God's behalf.

Daughter of poverty! you who have known the pinch of want, tell of the faithfulness of God that supported you. Child of pain! you who have tossed so long upon a bed of affliction, changing your posture o'er and o'er, till your bones began to peep through your skin, tell, you patient sufferers—and there are many of you whose pangs are smart, whose wounds are incurable—tell how God has succored you. Be not silent, you who have gone through fire and water, the furnace and the flood. Testify, you fathers in the church, and you mothers in Israel—speak on God's behalf of the goodness, the guidance, and the grace you have proved.

Do not let the young recruits entertain hard thoughts of your Lord and Master. Tell them that the battle of life, stern though it be, does not baffle His counsel or His care. He who has upheld you will bear them through ten thousand billows, keep them alive in the midst of afflictions fiery as a furnace seven times heated, and even to the end will prove that He is their gracious God. You have yet to speak on God's behalf.

Now, brethren and sisters, some of you may not only have so to speak in the chambers where the afflicted are confined, and in the Sunday school where the little children come round your knee, and in your own families and workshops, but *you may have a call to speak in the open streets, or in the pulpits of our sanctuaries*. I pray you, then, if you have ability for such work in this day of blasphemy and rebuke, stand not back.

I am persuaded that some of my brethren look for greater talents before they can speak for Christ, than they have a right to expect at the first. If none are permitted to speak on God's behalf but those who have ten talents, surely the kingdom of God must be deeply indebted to the education and scholarship of learned men. But if I read this Word aright, it is not so. Rather has it pleased God to take weak and foolish things to confound the mighty and the wise. Therefore, let not the brother of low degree keep back his testimony. If you can only say a few good words, say them.

Who would withhold a few drops of moisture from the flowers in the garden because he had no plenteous streams at his command? Should every twinkling star cease its shining because it was not a sun, the night how dark! the firmament, how bereft of its beauty! Did each drop of rain refuse to fall because it was but a drop, we would lack the goodly showers which cheer the thirsty soil! Do what you can if you cannot do what you would, for you, even you, have yet to speak on God's behalf.

And peradventure, you have more talent than you think, a little exercise might bring out your latent powers. Men grow not up to man's estate in a week or a year. Rome was not built in a day. How can you expect to be qualified to serve your God with much success unless you are trained with drill and discipline? If you begin to walk, or even to crawl on all fours, you may afterwards learn to run. Be content to use such powers as you have to the utmost of your ability, for He has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Do not reserve your strength, but consecrate all you have, "for He giveth more grace," diligently cultivate every faculty, knowing that He gives grace upon grace. "I have yet to speak on God's behalf."

I know not whether I am just now like the seraph who flew with a live coal, bearing it in the tongs from off the altar, to touch some lips, to put it to anyone's mouth, and say, "Lo, this has touched your lips." It may be so. Some child of God, hitherto dumb, may be called henceforth to speak for his Master. If you now hear a voice saying, "Who will go for us? Whom shall we send?" Let your answer be, "Here am I; send me." Respond, in the words of our text, "I have yet to speak on God's behalf."

Turn we now to—

II. THOSE ARGUMENTS WHICH READILY SUGGEST THEMSELVES TO SOME MINDS FOR KEEPING SILENCE.

Have I yet to speak on God's behalf? "Nay," says one, "pardon me, *but speaking out for God cannot be accounted essential to salvation*. Are there not some who come, like Nicodemus, by night? May there not be many believers in Jesus who have not the courage to speak out of the fullness of their heart? Why

should not I be one of these secret believers, and yet enter into heaven?" You think to go to the celestial city by a byroad, unseen and unnoticed, hoping to be safe at the last. Suppose it true that to avow your faith is not absolutely essential to salvation, I ask you if it is not absolutely essential to obedience, and I ask again if obedience is not essential to every believer as a vindication of his faith?

Though you may tell me that there are many secret believers, I venture to affirm that you never knew one, or do you think you did, the secret must have been ill kept if you knew it. Obviously, if it was a genuine secret, it must have been beyond your ken, or mine either, so we cannot fairly argue about it, and as we do not know that such a thing ever was, we have no fact to build upon. Surely to someone or other that gracious secret must have been made known, or what you tried to conceal someone would have found out.

I should think, if your Christian character and conduct were not palpable, your Christianity could scarcely be sterling. Who can conceal fire in his bosom? Will it not sooner or later break out? The more wicked the persons by whom you are surrounded, the more readily will they discover the difference between a Christian and themselves. You can scarcely conceal the light, it must reveal itself. Why, therefore, should you attempt to hide it?

Merely to do what is absolutely necessary for salvation is a mean, selfish thing. To be always thinking about whether this or that is necessary to your being saved, is this how you would show your allegiance to the Savior? Should the self-denial of our blessed Lord and Master be requited with the selfishness of followers who are always muttering, "*Cui bono?* What profit can I make of His service?" Oh! that we may be delivered from such an ungenerous disposition!

Knowing that Christ has done so much for us, and feeling the compelling power of love, may we rejoice to serve Him, whether the service shall be grateful to our taste, or mortifying to our pride, so doing, we shall soon find that in keeping His commandments there is great reward.

"But do you happen to be of a very retiring disposition?" A beautiful disposition that is, I have no doubt, and rare enough in some select circles to claim admiration, but undesirable, indeed, on some particular fields at some critical junctures. For a soldier, when the battle is raging, to be of a retiring disposition would be neither patriotic nor praiseworthy. Had this dainty temper been the main virtue of the hosts from whence British heroes leapt forth, the trumpet of fame had long since ceased to resound the deeds of prowess of which every Englishman is proud.

A soldier of Christ may well be modest in estimating himself, but he had need be mighty in serving his Lord. If he be too modest to avow his Master, this shameless modesty betrays a craven spirit, at which his comrades well might shudder.

***"Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend
On whom my hopes of heaven depend?
No! when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere His name."***

Ashamed of Jesus! Really the words seem so harsh that they imply an insult. Yet this beautiful, retiring disposition, when translated out of the fine words in which you wrap it up, means nothing more nor less than a disloyalty which verges hard on treason. Ashamed of Jesus, who shed His blood for you! Ah! you must all confess that there is no violation of genuine modesty in avowing one's intense attachment and allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. This may be true retirement, after all, for you may renounce thereby the world's praises, repudiate her honors, bring upon yourself her loudest censure, and be requited with the cold shoulder by your companions when you take up your cross and follow Him.

But have I not often heard persons say, "Why should I speak on God's behalf, when already *some who do speak are hypocrites?*" This seems to me a reason why you should speak twice as much, in order to counteract their false testimony, and why you should speak with all the more carefulness and integrity, making their example a beacon, lest you fall into the same condemnation. If a friend of mine

has an enemy who is a snake in the grass, pretending kindness while he is plotting mischief, am I, therefore, to say, "I will forsake my friend, and not own him, because another is a traitor to him"? Such reasoning would refute itself, let us not, therefore, delude ourselves with its subtlety.

The more hypocrites there are, the more need of honest men to grasp the banner of the cross. The more deceivers, the more cause why the faithful and the true should come and fill up the ranks, and prevent the battle being turned over to the enemy.

Or do you hesitate to speak for God *because you are afraid your testimony would be so very feeble?* But why disquiet yourselves on this ground? Are not all great things the aggregate of little things? And may there not be something great involved in the motion of the little? A good word from your tongue may kindle a thought or a series of thoughts which may issue in the conversion of one whose eloquence shall shake the nation. You emit but a spark, but what a conflagration it may cause, heaven only knows.

What though you seem tiny and insignificant as the coral insect, yet if you do your fair share of the work with your fellows, you may help to pile up an island that shall be abundant in fertility, and adorned with beauty. You are not called upon to do aught that exceeds your power or your skill. Enough that you do what you can. God requires not according to what a man has not, but according to what a man has. Therefore, let it be no excuse for your silence that you cannot speak with a voice of thunder.

"But," says one, "were I to open my mouth on God's behalf, *I should feel ever afterwards a weight of responsibility from which I could not escape.* A man of God standing by that pool not many weeks ago said to me, "I dare not be baptized, though I believe it is a Scriptural ordinance, because I feel that it involves such a solemn profession. I would never be able to live up to it." My reply to him was. "Is not that the very reason why you should yield up yourself to God at once, for the more we feel bound to holiness, the better?"

"Thy vows are upon me." Should the profession of our faith in Christ become a restriction to us, it need not be regretted on that account. We need such restrictions. If we shall feel bound to be more precise, we serve a precise God, and if we feel bound to be more jealous, we serve a jealous God. I like to see men put upon their mettle.

Members of this church, whenever the world picks holes in your coat and watches you, I am thankful to the world for doing so! It is good for our welfare to have an eagle eye upon us. What though Argus uses all his eyes, let us only be what we should be, and we need not mind who criticized or carps at us. If we are not what we ought to be, but mere hypocrites, then, in truth, we may well wish to be hidden.

Confess the name of Jesus, become a true follower in His blessed footsteps, and walk with all humility and carefulness, as His grace shall enable you, worthy of your high calling. Be bold to confess His name all the more, certainly none the less, because such confession will lay you under solemn obligations to live nearer to Him than before.

Still, I can imagine that there are many here who are urging some excuse or other, which they would not like to mention. They say they will wait a little, they will tarry awhile. Others say nothing, but are simply neglecting the duty. Well, I will not stay to argue with them, but I will rather pray that God the Holy Spirit may convince them, if they have been quickened from their spiritual death, and are this day heirs of God, to face their incumbent duty and their blessed privilege in all ways, and on all prudent opportunities to speak on God's behalf.

But there are—

III. COGENT REASONS WHY WE SHOULD SPEAK ON GOD'S BEHALF, to which I will now draw your attention.

Surely *it is demanded of all believers.* We are bidden to confess with the mouth if we have believed with the heart. We have, moreover, the promise that, "he that with his heart believeth, and with his mouth confesseth, shall be saved," and this likewise, "He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven." The alternative is fraught with judgment, "He that denieth me"—which signifies a non-confession—"he that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my

Father which is in heaven." If it be, then, the Lord's will, it is at your peril that you forget or neglect it. "He that knoweth his Master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." Hasten, then, you backward Christian. Make haste, and delay not to keep this commandment, be convinced that you have yet to speak on God's behalf.

Be assured that such testimony as you can and ought to bear *would be a great comfort to the Lord's people*. You do not know, some of you saved ones who have never confessed your faith, what pleasure it would give the minister. I know of no joy comparable to that of hearing that one has been made the instrument of the conversion of a soul. It keeps our spirits up, and our Master knows that we have good need sometimes of some success to encourage us.

He who thinks that the Christian ministry is an easy post, exempt from care and free and from trials, had better try it. 'Twere better to be a galley-slave, chained to the oar, than to be a minister of the Gospel, if it were not for the strong consolations which support us in the present, and for the divine reward which there will be at the last.

He who diligently discharges this solemn vocation never knows rest or release from anxiety. His mind is always actively exercised in his Master's service, his heart bears about a load which it cannot shake off. He dreams of some who walk disorderly, and wakes to sigh and cry over others who grow cold or lukewarm. He must plough the stony ground, and he can but regret the loss of his seed. He scatters the good seed on the way, and if it come not up by and by, according to the promise, he cries, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" As cold water to a thirsty soul, so would the news be of your conversion. You saved ones ought, for that reason, to speak on God's behalf.

And how encouraging it is to the entire church! In the church assembly I am sure we often have simple music that is more thrilling than any of the anthems in your cathedrals. There is joyful melody in our hearts before the Lord when we hear of a broken hearted penitent finding peace, of an outcast reclaimed from the wilds, an outrageous sinner led into paths of obedience and holiness. Even the angels account this to be rare music to be mightily relished. I believe they strike their golden harps to nobler melody when they learn that prodigals have sought their Father's face. You have yet to speak on God's behalf for His church's sake, that she may be encouraged.

Greatly, too, does it behoove you to speak on God's behalf, *for the sake of the undecided*. Some of them would probably be fully persuaded if they saw your example. How many people there are in the world who are led by the influence that others exert over them! Thousands have been brought to Jesus just as those early disciples, of whom we read, that Andrew followed Jesus, and presently brought his own brother Simon to Jesus, or Philip, who, after being found of Jesus, finds Nathanael, and tells him and draws him to the Savior. We can all exert an influence of some kind, let us tell what God has worked in us, and many a one who halts between two opinions may, by divine grace, be induced to cast in his lot with the people of God.

Look on the great outlying world. What a mass of creatures whose *lives must prove a blessing or a curse!* Will you not speak on God's behalf for their sakes? Do you not feel compelled to bear your testimony against their neglect, their waywardness, and their willful disobedience of the great Father? With habitual negligence and constant forgetfulness, they slight Him who never forgets them, Him who, with un-slumbering eyes, watches for their good.

Lay this to heart, my brethren, and come out, I pray you, be you separate, touch not the unclean thing. You have your Father's promise that He will be a Father to you, and you shall be His children. You are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world, why, then, should you seek to remain mingled with the world in name? Be distinct and separate, take up the cross daily, and follow your Master.

For your own sake, too, I would venture to press this upon any of you who are backward in avowing your faith. You cannot conceive what blessing it would bring you were you distinctly and persistently to speak for Jesus. That timidity which now embarrasses you would speedily cease to check your zeal.

After you had once openly professed Christ, gifts that now slumber unconsciously to yourself would be developed by exercise. Rich comfort the service of God would then bring you.

Were you ever to win a soul for Jesus, you would be happier than the merchantman when he found the goodly pearl. You would think that all the happiness you ever knew before was less than nothing compared with the joy of saving a soul from death and rescuing a sinner from going down into the pit. The bliss of speaking a word that should affect three worlds, making a change in heaven, and earth, and hell, as devils grind their teeth in wrath because one of their victims is snatched out of their jaws, as men on earth wonder and admire the change that grace has wrought, and as angels rejoice when they hear of sinners saved.

For the sake of Him who bought you with His precious blood, seek out others who have been redeemed at the same inestimable price. For the sake of that blessed Spirit who brought you to Jesus, and who now moves in you that you may move others to come to Jesus, be up and doing, steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. You have yet to speak on God's behalf, and these are the motives that ought to move you.

And now let me close with—

IV. ONE OR TWO SUGGESTIONS.

Should you feel, dear friends, that you ought to speak on God's behalf—and I hope you do feel it—whether brethren in public ministry, or sisters in the privacy of social circles, I would counsel you, before you begin to speak, to *seek of God guidance as to how you shall speak on His behalf*. There are better words spoken of by the ignorant when they wait upon God than by the wise when they speak out of their own heads.

It is wonderful to read the answers which some of the martyrs gave to their accusers. Think of that woman, Anne Askew, how, after being racked and tortured, she nonplussed the priests. It is really marvelous to read how she overcame them. And there was my Lord Mayor of London—what a fool she made of him! He put to her this question, “Woman, if a mouse were to eat the blessed sacrament which contains the body and blood of Christ, what do you think would become of it?” “My lord,” she answered, “that is a deep question, I had rather you would answer it yourself. My Lord Mayor, what do you think would become of the mouse that should do that?” “I verily believe” said the Lord Mayor, whose ears must have been preternaturally long, “I verily believe the mouse would be damned!” And what said Anne Askew? Why, what could she reply better than this, “Alas! poor mouse.”

Often a few short words—three or four words—have met the case when the martyrs have waited upon God, and they have made their adversaries seem so ridiculous that I think they might hear a laugh both from heaven and hell at once at their foolery, for God's servants have convicted them of folly and put them to shame.

Ask what you should say, particularly when men would wrest your words, and when they would catch you in the speech. Be like your Master sometimes—stoop down and write on the ground, wait a while. Sometimes a question is best answered by another question. Ask your Master to teach you that rhetoric which confounds men who would catch you in your speech.

And if you seek the conversion of others, especially recollect that *it is words from God's mouth rather than words from your mouth that will effect it*, ask the Master, for He knows how to draw the bow when you cannot. You might draw it at a venture, but He can draw at a certainty, so that the arrows shall surely pierce between the joints of the armor. Here is a prayer for every man and woman that has to speak for Jesus, “Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.”

And look to *the Holy Ghost, that He would bless what He directs you to say*. It were better to speak five words by the promptings of the Holy Spirit than to utter whole volumes without His guidance. Better be filled with silent musings by the blessed Spirit of God than pour forth floods of words and sentences, however pleasant, without His influence. There is an irresistible power about the man who has an unction from the Holy One which Demosthenes or Pericles, Cicero or Socrates, never dreamed

of. Put the man up to speak to his fellow men who is endowed with this mysterious power, and he will make hearts of stone melt, and force a way for the truth of God through gates of brass and bars of triple steel.

Where the Divine Witness attests the word spoken, there is a majesty in the simplest utterances that carries conviction to the heart, while it makes Satan and all his myrmidons tremble. Seek for this might. Tarry at Jerusalem till you are endowed with power from on high, and then speak boldly on God's behalf. Wherever your calling may be, and whenever your opportunity shall arise, speak as one whose heart has been enlarged, as one whose mouth has been opened, as one who is filled with the Spirit.

Very earnestly would I caution you young Christians not to put off or delay speaking, otherwise you will lack the facility you might quickly attain by habitually attending to it. An aptitude for speaking to people one by one is very desirable.

I know some brethren in the ministry whom I greatly envy for the possession of a talent which I do not possess in the same proportion as they do. The genius of conversation so sanctified that one can be personal and yet prudent, plain and pointed, yet withal pleasant, administering a rebuke without endangering a rebuff, winning a man's confidence while wounding his pride, and commending the Gospel by the courteousness with which it is stated—that is a power of utterance to be emulated by us all. We are too apt to be ambitious of speaking to the many and oblivious of the talking power that can adroitly speak to a friend.

Begin early, then, after your conversion to speak one by one with your kinsfolk and acquaintances. Keep up the practice. Should you find yourselves getting sluggish, so that it becomes irksome to you, seek unto the Lord, confess your sin before Him. The tact of speaking to individuals is worth all the study and attention you can bestow upon it. Ask for wisdom and prudence to know when to speak, and how to speak. It is not every fisherman who can catch fish. There is a knack about it, and so there is about speaking for Christ.

There is a suitable time and there is a suitable way. Why, there are some people who, if they were to try to speak for Christ, would do mischief! They have got such forbidding faces, such ungainly manners, such a coarse way of expressing themselves, that in spite of good intentions, they rather hinder than help. They expect to catch their flies with vinegar, but they will never succeed or be able to do it. If they could learn to be kind and genial, affable and sympathetic, they would be far more likely to succeed.

There are men who put the truth in such a shape that it looks like a lie. There are other men who do a good deal with so little delicacy that they affront those they intend to oblige. Do let us learn, when we speak for God, to speak in the best possible manner, exercising all the Christian graces. Of our blessed Lord it was said, "Never man spoke like this man." Of us who are His humble followers may it be observed that we have been with Jesus and have learned of Him.

God grant you, believers all, grace to speak for God, and you unbelievers, may you be brought to trust the Master and to love them, and then speak for Him, and His be the praise, though yours the profit. Amen.

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