THE DANGER OF UNCONFESSED SIN

NO. 1366

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE NEWINGTON

"When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long."
Psalm 32:3

IT is well-known that in ordinary cases grief which is kept within the bosom grows more and more intense. It is a very great relief to shed tears—it gives a vent to the heart. We sometimes pity those who weep, but there is a grief too deep for tears, which is far more worthy of compassion—we ought most to pity those who cannot weep.

A dry sorrow is a terrible one, but clear shining often follows the rain of tears. Tears are hopeful things. They are the dewdrops of the morning foretelling the coming day. So is it also a very great consolation to tell your story to a friend. I do not know whether it would not be a comfort even to speak it to a little child, even if the child could not understand you.

There is something in telling your sorrow and letting it out. Otherwise it is like a mountain lake which has no outlet, into which the rains descend and the torrents rush, and at last the banks are broken and a flood is caused. Let your soul flow forth in words as to your common griefs, it is well for you. A festering wound is dangerous. Many have lost their reason because they had good reason to tell their sorrows, but had not reason enough to do so.

Much talk has in it much of sin, but a heart full of agony must speak or burst. Therefore, let it talk on and even repeat itself, for in so doing it will spend itself–.

"Sorrow weeps!
And spends its bitterness in tears;
My child of sorrow,
Weep out the fullness of thy passionate grief,
And drown in tears
The bitterness of lonely years."

We shall now, however, think of spiritual sorrows, and to these the same rule applies. "When I kept silence," and did not pour out my sorrow where I ought to have confessed it, "my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long."

Is it not a great mercy for us that we have the Book of Psalms, and the life of such a man as David? Biographies of most people nowadays are like the portraits of a past generation, when the art of flattery in oils was at its height. There is no greater cheat than a modem biography. It is not the man at all, but what he might have been if he had not been something else.

They give you a lock of his hair, or his wig, or his old coat, but seldom the man. They make huge volumes out of a heap of his letters which ought to have been burned, and they copy little scraps of pictures which he used to draw for friends—and neither the letters nor the sketches ought ever to have been published.

Like burglars, they break into a man's chamber, and purloin his hidden things. They hold up to the public eye what was meant for privacy only, and expose the secrets of the man's heart and hearth. Things which the man would never have drawn or written, if he had thought that they would meet the public eye, are dragged forth and brought out as precious things, and so they are, but precious nonsense.

We have no biographers nowadays. When Boswell died, the greatest of all biographers died, and he was not far removed from a fool. If a man lives a noble life, he may well shrink from dying, because he knows what will become of him nowadays, when writers of his memoirs unearth him, and tear him to pieces.

David's Psalms are his best memorial. There you have not the man's exterior, but his inward soul. They do not reveal the outward manifestations of the man, but you see the man's heart—the inner David, the David that groaned, and the David that wept, the David that sighed, and the David that sinned, the David that yearned after God, and the David that was eaten up with the zeal of God's house—the man who was born in sin and groaned over sin, and was yet the man after God's own heart.

What a wonderful autobiography of a wonderful life that Book of Psalms is! David was a many-sided man, and his life was like the life of our Lord in this respect—that it seemed to comprehend the lives of all other men within itself.

There is no man, I suppose, who has known the Lord in any age since David wrote, but has seen himself in David's Psalms as in a looking-glass, and has said to himself, "This man knows all about me. He has been into every room of my soul—into its lowest cellar and into its loftiest tower. He has been with me in the dens of my inbred sin, and in the palaces of my fellowship with Christ, from which I have looked upon the glory of God."

Here is a man who "seems to be, not one, but all mankind's epitome." Though we mourn over David's sin, yet we thank God that it was permitted, for if he had not so fallen, he had not been able to help us when we are conscious of transgression. He could not have so minutely described our griefs if he had not felt the same. David lived, in this respect, for others as well as for himself.

I am thankful that David was permitted to try the experiment of silence after his great sin, for he will now tell us what came of it, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long."

We shall apply this first, as it should be, *to the erring child of God convicted of his sin*. And then secondly, we shall remind you that the same rule holds good with *the awakened sinner in whom the Spirit of God has begun to work a sense of guilt.*

I. First, LET US THINK OF THE CHILD OF GOD.

Children of God sin! Some of them have claimed to be well-nigh free from it, but—I will say no more—but I think they sinned when they talked in such a lofty strain. God's children sin, for they are still in the body. If they are in a right state of heart, they will mourn over this, and it will be the burden of their lives.

Oh that they could live without sin! It is this that they sigh after, and they can never be fully content until they obtain it. They do not excuse themselves by saying, "I cannot be perfect," but they feel that their inability is their sin. They regard every transgression and tendency to sin as a grievous fault, and they mourn over it from day to day. They would be holy as Christ is holy. To will is present with them, but how to perform that which they would, they find not.

Now, when the child of God sins, the proper thing for him to do is at once to go and tell his heavenly Father. As soon as ever we are conscious of sin, the right thing is not to begin to reason with the sin, or to wait until we have brought ourselves into a proper state of heart about it, but to go at once and confess the transgression unto the Lord, there and then.

Sin will not come to any very great head in a man's heart who does this continually. God will never have great chastisements in store for those who are quick confessors of sin. You know how it is with your child.

There has been something broken, perhaps, by carelessness. There has been some violation of a rule of the house, but if he comes and catches you by the sleeve and says, "Father," or "Mother, I am very sorry that I have been doing wrong"—why, you know, while you are sorry that he should transgress, you are glad to think that his heart is so right that without being questioned he comes of his own accord, and tells you so frankly that he was wrong.

Whatever grief you may feel about his fault, you feel a greater joy in the frankness of his confession, and the tenderness of his conscience, and you have forgiven him, I am sure, before he has got half way through his open-hearted acknowledgment. You feel that you cannot be angry with so frank and penitent a child.

Though sometimes you may have to put on a sour look, and shake your head, and reprimand, and scold a little, yet if the little eyes fill with tears, and the confession becomes still more open, and the sorrow still more evident—it is not hard to move you to give the child a kiss and send him away with, "Go and sin no more. I have forgiven you."

heavenly Father is a much more tender Father than any of us, and therefore, if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more shall our heavenly Father forgive us our trespasses? "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him," and therefore He has compassion upon the children of men when they acknowledge their offenses.

We are not more ready to forgive our children than our heavenly Father is ready to forgive us. We may be quite sure of that. And so, if it be our habit—and I do trust it is—never to suffer guilt to lie upon our consciences, but to go as soon as ever we are sensible of a fault and own it before the Lord, asking pardon from Him for Jesus' sake, there will be no great amount of damage done to ourselves, and the Lord's anger will not wax hot against us, neither will severe chastisements happen to us.

We may endure sharp afflictions, because they are often sent for another purpose, but we shall not have visitations of paternal wrath. Many trials are not sent for chastisements at all, but as preparations for higher usefulness—for every branch that bears fruit He purges, evidently not because of any offense in the branch, but even because the branch is good and does bear fruit, and therefore it is allowed the special privilege of the pruning knife that it may bring forth more fruit.

Speedy and full confession will not prevent tribulations which are meant merely for instruction, but it will avert trials which are intended as severe chastisements, and this will be no small benefit. Did not David pray, "O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure"?

Now, it sometimes happens that God's children, when they have done wrong—especially if they have done very, very wrong—do not go and confess it. When there is the most necessity for confession, there is often the greatest tardiness in making it.

It was so in David's case. Alas! how foully had he fallen! It is never to any purpose to try and excuse David's sin. There are certain palliating circumstances, but he never mentioned them, and therefore we need not. Indeed, if David were here tonight, and we were to begin excusing his sin, he would rise with tears in his eyes and say, "For God's sake do not attempt it. Let it stand in all its deformity, that the power of God's mercy may be the more clearly seen in washing me, and making me whiter than snow."

But David's heart was very naughty. It was sound towards God as a rule. There was deep love to God always there, but it had become overlaid and crusted with what was always David's great besetment—the strong passions of his impulsive nature. He had followed in some measure the ill example of neighboring kings, in taking a number of wives to himself, and this had fed rather than checked his natural tendencies.

And at length in an evil hour, he fell into a crime of deepest dye. He knew that he was doing wrong. He sinned against light and knowledge, but alas, he did not hasten to his God and confess the grievous crime.

I think I can see why he could not have gone straight away from the sin to confession, for *the sin prevented the confession*—the sin blinded the eye, stultified the conscience, and stupefied the entire spiritual nature of David. Hence he did not confess at once, but surely he felt as if he must own the fault when the time came for prayer.

I have no doubt that David prayed after a sort, but he must have presented very formal and mutilated prayers so long as he refused to acknowledge his transgression. When the time came for David to finger his harp, perhaps he did so, and went through a song or a psalm, but he could never reach to the essence of true praise by pouring out his heart before God while the foul sin was hidden in his bosom.

How could he? His psalms and his prayers were silence before God, whatever sound he made, for his heart did not speak, and God would not hear him. However sweet the tone or the tune, his songs were nothing to the Most High, for his heart was silent. And why was he silent when he knew that he was wrong?

Why did he not go to God at once? Well, it was partly because he was stupefied by his sin. He was fascinated, captivated, and held in bondage by it. Oh, brethren and sisters, beware of the basilisk eye of sin. It is dangerous to even look at sin, for looking leads to longing. A look at sin often leads to a lusting after sin, and that soon ripens into the actual indulgence.

No man even thinks of sin without damage. I saw a magnificent photograph in Rome, one of the finest I had ever seen, and right across the middle there was the specter mark of a cart and two oxen, repeated many times. The artist had tried to get it out, but the trace remained. While his plate was exposed to take the view, the cart and the oxen had gone across the scene, and they were indelible.

Often in the photograph of a fine building you will see the shade of a man who passed by, who is represented by a sort of ghostly figure. Upon our soul every sinful thought leaves a mark and a stain that calls for us to weep it out—nay, needs Christ's blood to wash it away.

We begin with thinking of sin, and then we somewhat desire the sin. Next we enter into communion with the sin, and then we get into the sin, and the sin gets into us, and we lie asoak in it. So David did. He did not feel it at first, but there he was, plunged into the evil deeps. In such a state sin does not appear burdensome.

A man with a pail of water on his head feels it to be heavy, but if he dives, he does not feel the weight of the water above him because he is actually in it and surrounded by it. When a man plunges into sin, he does not feel the weight of the sin as he does when he is out of that dreadful element, then he is burdened by it. So David did not feel His guilt at first. He knew that he had done wrong, but he did not perceive the exceeding heinousness of his evil deed, and therefore he did not confess it.

Next, *there was much pride in David's heart*. Have you a child who, when he has offended, knows he is wrong, but will not own it? If so, you talk to him, but he will not speak. He is quite silent, or if he does speak, it is not in the right way. He makes some naughty, obstinate, strong-headed speech. You cannot bring him to say, "Father, I have done wrong," but he tries to excuse himself in this way and that.

Perhaps he partly denies the fault, and only mentions certain things that other people did, by way of excuse for himself. Now, what our children do to us we have often done to God. We have sullenly stood it out before Him.

I remember well a story of a reputable Christian man, who on a certain occasion was betrayed into drinking. He was a long time in distress of mind about his sin. He had been drunk, but when he was spoken to about it, as he was by some of the officers of the church, he said that he was "overtaken," and added that, "a very little affected him."

I think that is what he said, and he pleaded that some others had been overtaken too, and he did not see why such notice should be taken of a little slip. All this he said to leave a loophole for himself. When he had done saying that, he would add—Well, he did not know, he did not believe that he was drunk. He was sure that nobody could prove that he was, though he might have taken a little more than was good for him.

His tongue talked in that way, but his heart knew better. He was a child of God, and he knew he was wrong, and he never got peace by making these shocking self-defenses. He was, indeed, terribly tortured in his soul, till at last he went down on his knees and said, "Lord, I have been drunk. There is no use in denying it. I, who am Your servant, have been drunk. Forgive me, for Your mercy's sake, and keep me henceforth from even tasting of the intoxicating cup."

He honestly confessed his transgression, and a sweet sense of pardon followed at once. It takes some professors a long time to get up to that point. We call our sin by some other name, and fancy that it is not quite so bad in us as it would be in others. Oh, the ways we have got of trying to extenuate, and oh,

the sullenness which has sometimes been put on, and carried out for days and days together before the living God by God's naughty children when they have fallen into an ill-temper.

I have no doubt that some have been silent before God for a time as to the confession of their wrong, *because of fear*. They could not believe that, after all, their Father loved them. They thought that if they did confess they would receive a heavy sentence and be overwhelmed with wrath.

David had often looked up into the face of God and known His love, but now that he had thrown dust into his own eyes, he could not see God's face, and he only felt God's chastening hand, for he says, "Day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." The sun burned him up, but afforded him none of the sunshine of the face of God.

Unbelief is sure to follow sin of the kind committed by David. When it has brought on sullenness of temper, then we begin to think that God deals hardly with us, whereas it is we that are dealing hardly with Him. If we would confess, all would be well, but there is the hard point.

It is not, *if* He would forgive, for He is ready to blot out the transgressions of His people, but the difficulty lies in *if* we would believe in His love. There is a great deal of the Pharisee in many Christians. You may question the statement, but I should not wonder if there is a good deal of the Pharisee *in you*, or else you would not have doubted the assertion.

You are so much of a Pharisee that you do not think yourself a Pharisee. But we are prone to begin thinking, "Surely, surely, I, at such a time was a worthy object of God's love, but now I am not." Oh, then, you were once a wonder of goodness, and marvelously worthy and excellent? Do not believe it.

My dear brother, perhaps you were as bad when you had not openly transgressed as you are now, for then your disease may have taken the form of pride, and though it has now taken another shape, it may be no worse, for pride is as damnable as any other form of sin. He who says to himself, "I am righteous. I can stand before God and deserve His love," is as surely lost as though he had fallen into gross sin. Take heed of the Pharisee that lurks within you.

Anyhow, whatever was the reason, David was silent about his sin for some long time. The result of it was that his sorrow became worse and worse. He could not pray. He tried to pray, but as he would not confess his sin, it stuck in his throat, and till that was out, he could not pray.

But still he *must* pray, so he took to roaring. That is to say, it was such inarticulate, indistinct prayer, and there was so much of his soul in it, that he calls it the roaring of a beast instead of the praying of a man. His inward grief over his unconfessed sin was such that his bones began to wax old. They are the pillars of the house, the strongest part of the entire system, but even they seemed as if they would decay.

He was brought into ill health of body through the torment of his mind. He could find no peace, and yet he would not go and confess the sin. He was still sullenly looking up to God, not as a sinner, but as a saved one, and talking to God as if he were righteous, while at the same time his sin was crushing him.

All this while, I say, his grief gathered, and there was only one cure for it—he ought to have confessed it to the Lord. As soon as it was confessed he was forgiven. How quick was that act of amnesty and oblivion! David said, "I have sinned," and Nathan said, "The LORD hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."

If pardon be so near at hand, who would linger a moment? Who among us would not at once repair to our heavenly Father, and with our heads in his bosom sob out the confession of our sin? Because He is so ready to forgive we ought to be ready to confess.

I may be addressing a child of God, or one who thought that he was a child of God, who has grievously fallen. My brethren, go you with haste to your Lord, and acknowledge your iniquity. He bids you come. Only confess your iniquity in which you have transgressed against the Lord, and He will have mercy upon you now.

And oh, what a relief it is when you have discharged the load, and when the voice of mercy has said, "You are forgiven. Go in peace." "What would I give for that," says one. Well, you need not give anything. Do but confess, and if you confess into the ear of God, with faith in His dear Son, for Jesus'

sake He will accept you, and seal your pardon home to your soul. Come and unburden your spirit at the bleeding feet of the Redeemer, and leap for joy.

Thus have I tried to encourage the Lord's own children to confess their sins. I do not know for whom these words are particularly meant, but I am driven to say them, for I labor under the strong impression that there is some child of God here who is almost despairing of the Lord's mercy, and who is well-nigh ready to renounce his profession of religion, because he fears that the Lord's mercy is clean gone forever.

My dear friend, judge not so harshly of Him who loves you still. Did He not love us when we were dead in trespasses and sins, and will He not love us if now our sin has wounded us again? He never loved us because we were good, and therefore as He knew all that we should be, He will not change in His affection.

He "commendeth his love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly"—died for us *as sinners*. If you never did come to Him—if all your religion has been a mistake—do not begin to argue upon that matter, but come to Jesus now, for the first time. Many and many a score of times have I done that.

When the devil has said, "Your faith has been mere delusion, and your experience has been all a fiction," and I have replied, "I will not dispute with you, Sir Devil, but I will just go to Christ as a sinner, for I know He came to seek and to save sinners, even lost ones, such as I am. And I will humbly ask Him anew to be my Savior."

That is a short cut to comfort. May the Spirit lead you into it. Be not baffled by Satanic suggestions, but come to Jesus over again, and over again, and over again, "to whom coming as unto a living stone"—looking unto Jesus—not having looked once, but continually looking and trusting in Him.

II. But now I must have a few minutes, while we use this same subject in reference TO THE AWAKENED SINNER.

Some in this place, perhaps, have lately been aroused to a consciousness of guilt before God. But one thing they have not done, they have never made confession of their sin. They feel the burden of it in a measure, and they will feel it more, but as yet they have kept their grief to themselves. Neither to God nor man have they poured out their souls.

To speak to our fellow men about our heart troubles is comparatively of little use, and yet I would not recommend persons under conviction of sin always to hide their souls' sorrows from their Christian friends. They might often be much helped if they would communicate their thoughts to those who have gone further on the road to heaven, and know more about Christ and the way of salvation.

Yet, for the most part, a wounded conscience, like a wounded stag, delights to be alone that it may bleed in secret. It is very hard to get at a man under conviction of sin. He retires so far into himself that it is impossible to follow him.

Ah, you poor mourners, I know how you try to conceal your pains. I will tell you one reason why you do not like to tell your mother, your sister, your brother. It is because you think your feelings are so strange—you suppose that nobody ever felt like you—you have the notion that you must be the worst person that ever lived, and therefore you are ashamed to tell what you feel for fear your friends should scout you out of their society.

Ah, poor soul, you do not know. You do not know. We have all been on your road. When you tell of your sin, you put us in memory of the way in which we talked, perhaps five-and-twenty years ago, or more, when we, too, felt sin a burden as you feel it now. When you tell us of the greatness of your sin, and think that we shall surely despise you, and never speak to you again, tears of joy are in our eyes to think that you feel as we did.

We are glad to discover your tender and contrite spirit—we only wish that thousands felt as you do. Do you not remember what George Whitefield said when his brother at the dinner table said that he was a lost soul? Mr. Whitefield said, "Thank God," and his brother wondered. "Why," said Whitefield, "Jesus came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost."

The more black you think yourself to be, the brighter is our hope of you. When you poor tremblers give yourselves an awful character, we know it is correct, and we do not wish to contradict you, but we are glad to hear you say it, and to know that you feel it, because now we see in you that which will prepare you to value a precious Christ.

A man who says, "I am well-clothed," is not likely to accept Christ's righteousness. But when he cries, "How naked I am, how useless are these fig leaves," He is the man for Christ's robes. When you meet with a man who says, "I am full. I feast on my own righteousness," what is the good of inviting him to the Gospel banquet? You must invite him, for you are commanded to do so, but he will refuse to come.

But when you meet with another who is hungry, and faint, and ready to die—ah! there is the man for your money. Bid him come where the oxen and the fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. His mouth is watering while you speak to him, and he will come with you, and sit down at the banquet of the King. We are glad, poor sinner, to hear your tale.

And therefore the next time you meet with a Christian, I would advise you to tell him a little of it. But still that is not what you most want. You need to lay bare your deep sorrow before your God. And oh, if you do it, there stands the promise, "He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy." Confession before God was never sincerely offered but absolution from the Most High was sure to follow.

Remember that, even though you do not go and tell the Lord, He knows already, and therefore concealment is in vain. He needs not your confession for His information, but for your own benefit. But if you do not confess to Him, you certainly will never obtain pardon, for there is not between the covers of the Holy Bible a single intimation that God will ever pardon unconfessed sin. If you cover and cloak it, and feel no repentance about it, and do not bring it to Christ, you cannot expect to receive mercy from the offended Lord.

Now, it happens with some that, though they are conscious of sin, they do not confess it, and what is the result? Why, it increases their misery. It is impossible that you should find peace while sin continues to gather in your soul. It is a festering wound—the lancet must be let in, there cannot be rest until it is so.

I have known a sinner, before confession of sin, feel as if he could lay violent hands upon himself, so intense was his anguish. Well do I remember repeating to myself the words of the prophet, "My soul chooseth strangling rather than life," for of all the tortures in this world, an awakened conscience, pressed down with a sense of guilt, is the worst.

The Spanish Inquisition invented cruel racks and thumbscrews, but there is no inquisitor like a man's own conscience, for it can put the screw upon the soul to the uttermost degree. Let a man's conscience loose upon him, and at once the worm commences to gnaw, and the fire begins to burn.

They used in olden times to ascribe the torment of hell to the devil. But we do not want any devil for that—conscience can measure out an infinite misery. Let but remorse lay its thongs of wire upon a man, and it will scarify him, and gash him to the very soul. So long as a man continues silent before God, and does not own his sin—if the Lord really has begun to deal with him, he will have to suffer more and more from the pangs of conscience.

But then, increase of sorrow accompanied by this silence is a very dangerous piece of business. I spoke cheeringly just now of those of you who are under a sense of sin, but it was only in the hope that you would go to God, through Jesus Christ, and confess your sin. For if you refuse to do so, your position is one of very great danger.

"What danger?" say you. Why, if sin remain festering within you, and your sorrow increases, you will come to despair altogether—and that is an awful prospect indeed. You remember John Bunyan's picture of the man in the iron cage? There is not in the "Pilgrim's Progress" an incident more terrible.

Now, you are forging the bars of a cage for yourself as long as you refuse to acknowledge your guilt before God. Those who are in the iron cage of despair will tell you that they delayed to acknowledge sin,

that they refused to accept Christ, that they suppressed their feelings, and so brought themselves into bondage. They were pleased to hear ministers preach about conviction of sin, and speak of deep sorrow and the like, but they did not care to be told that it was their duty, there and then, to believe in Jesus.

They could not endure that doctrine. They liked to be comforted in the notion that there was something good in feeling a sense of sin, apart from believing—whereas, if a soul will not believe in Christ, its sense of sin may be an evil instead of a benefit to it. Nothing can be good that is unsalted with faith. "With all your sacrifices thou shalt offer salt," and if the salt of faith is absent, the sacrifice is unacceptable.

We have known some who, through getting into despair, have afterwards fallen into utter hardness of heart. They used to be malleable. They used to feel the strokes of the divine hammer. Now they feel nothing, but are as hard as the blacksmith's anvil. They have got into such a condition that they wickedly say, if God will save them they will be saved, but they have nothing to do with it.

They once were tender—now they are presumptuous. They say, "There is no hope" and therefore, on the theory of the old proverb that they may as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb, in all probability they will go on to commit worse sins than ever.

Some of the biggest sinners that have ever disgraced the name of humanity have been persons who were once tender of conscience, and were on the point of conversion, but they did violence to conviction, came to despair of ever entering heaven. And in the end determined that as they must go to hell, they would go there with a high hand and an outstretched arm.

He who has seen heaven's gate open before him, but has not stepped in, is the man who above all others is likely to find the hottest place in hell. You may think it strange for me to say so, but I know it is so, for such persons go by the way of despair into hardness of heart, and then into the grossest transgression.

Yes, and this is the back door to atheism, for when a man feels that God and he can never be at peace—when he has made up his mind that he never will confess his sin—what is the first thing that he does to comfort himself? He says, "There is no God." And what does the declaration, "There is no God," mean? It means this—that the man feels that he would be much more happy if there were no God. That is what it means and nothing more.

It is the man's wish, rather than his creed, and he wishes it because he despairs, and his heart has grown hard. Oh, when God makes your heart soft as wax, mind who puts the seal upon it. If the Spirit of the living God set not the seal of deep repentance and holy faith upon the softened soul, there is another that will put the seal of despair, and perhaps of atheism and of defiant sin upon it. And then woe worth the day to you that ever you were born.

Refusal to confess is a perilous thing for your soul. I am sure that when a man begins to be awakened to a sense of sin, if he tarries long in that condition, he is being entangled moment by moment in the Satanic web. The devil cares little about careless sinners. "Let them alone," says he, "they will come to me by and by."

And as for very religious people who possess no true godliness, the devil does not bother them. He says, "No, let the hypocrites be in peace. They are going my way as nicely as possible. Why should I arouse them by causing them mistrust as to their state?" But the moment that souls are startled into a sense of sin, the devil says to himself, "I shall lose them," and so he plies all his arts, and uses all his craft, if by any means he may prevent their escape.

Man, now is your time to flee away to the city of refuge without tarrying even for an hour, for even now all the devils in hell are after you. They did not trouble about you before, but they are after you now with sevenfold energy. Close in with Christ, then, and at once escape them all. Oh, may the Spirit of God enable you to find eternal mercy through the confession of your sin to God, and looking to Christ for mercy—the mercy which He is so willing to give.

This is the last point. There is no hope, then, of any comfort to a bruised heart except by its confessing its guilt. I would earnestly urge upon every one conscious of sin to go with troubled heart,

and heaving bosom, and confess his transgression to the Lord at once. I would do it in detail, if I were you.

I find it sometimes profitable to myself to read the Ten Commandments, and to think over my sins against each one of them. What a list it is, and how it humbles you in the dust to read it over! When you come to that command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Ah," say you, "I have never been guilty there."

But when you are told by the Savior that a lustful glance breaks that command, how it alters all! Then you perceive that fleshly desires and imaginations are all sins, and you humble yourself in the dust. You read also, "Thou shalt not kill." "Well," say you, "I never killed anyone." But you change your note when you hear that, "He that is angry with his brother without a cause is a murderer."

When you see the spirituality of the law, and the way in which you have broken all the commandments ten thousand times over, be sure to confess it all, right sorrowfully.

I find it good to look all round sometimes and think, "I am a father. There are my sins against my children. Have I trained them up for God as I should? I am a husband. There are sins in that relationship. I am a master. There are sins in that position. How have I acted towards my servants? I am a pastor. How many sins occur in that relationship?"

Why, you will not look around you, if God opens your eyes, without being helped to see what you ought to confess. Take the very limbs of your body, and they will accuse you—sins of the brain in evil thoughts, sins of the eye in idle glances, sins of this little naughty member, the tongue, which does more mischief than all the rest. There is no member without its own special sins.

There are sins of the ear—how often have we heard the Gospel, but heard it in vain. On the other hand, have we not too often lent a willing ear to unholy words, and to wicked stories against our neighbors? I need not read over the calendar of our offenses from this pulpit—go and write it out in the closet, and pour out a flood of tears over it.

If you are willing to confess, everything will help you to confession, and there is good reason for doing it at once. May the Holy Spirit work with His most tender influences to melt your heart into contrition.

Remember while you are confessing, that each one of your sins has a world of evil in it. There is a mine of sin in every little sin. You have taken up a spider's nest sometimes—one of those little money-spinner's nests—and you have opened it. What thousands of spiders you find hanging down, and hastening away in divers directions. What a myriad of them.

So in every sin there is a host of sins. There is a conglomeration of many kinds of evil in every transgression, therefore be humbled on account of each one. Confess your iniquities before God, and accept the punishment as being your righteous due.

There stands the block, and there is the place for your neck—put it down, and say, "Lord, I submit to my sentence, and if You bid the headsman strike, I cannot complain." Go before God as the citizens of Calais came before the English king, with ropes about their necks. Submit yourselves to the punishment due to your offense, and then make an appeal ad misericordiam, to the mercy of God alone, and say, "For Christ's sake—for His blood's sake—have mercy upon me."

There is no man, woman, or child in this Tabernacle who shall do that tonight who shall be rejected, for "him that cometh to me," says Christ, "I will in nowise cast out." And this is the right way of coming—the way of confessing your sin, and acknowledging the evil of it, and turning to the great Substitute for deliverance.

Say that you deserve to be sent to hell, and cast yourself upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, trusting in the great Surety and Sacrifice, and you shall be accepted in and through Him. This is the way of life, and he who runs therein shall find salvation.

May the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, lead every one of you without exception to mourn your sin, and rest in Jesus. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 51:32

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—622, 51 (Part III.)

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.