

THE  
**WORKS**  
OF  
**THE REV . JOHN NEWTON**

LATE RECTOR OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF  
ST. MARY WOOLNOTH AND ST. MARY WOOLCHURCH-HAW,  
LOMBARD STREET, LONDON.

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CONTAINING  
AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE, &C., LETTERS ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS, CARDIPHONIA,  
DISCOURSES INTENDED FOR THE PULPIT,  
SERMONS PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF OLNEY,  
A REVIEW OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, OLNEY HYMNS, POEMS,  
MESSIAH, OCCASIONAL SERMONS, AND TRACTS.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED  
**MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE, &c.**

BY THE REV. R. CECIL, A. M.

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**COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.**

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# SERMONS

PREACHED IN THE PARISH-CHURCH OF OLNEY.  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

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TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE PARISH OF OLNEY.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I HAVE principally two motives for publishing these Discourses. The one is, to exhibit a specimen of the doctrine that is taught and most surely believed amongst us, to satisfy those who desire information, and to stop, if possible, the mouth of Slander. I cheerfully submit them to examination, in full confidence that they contain nothing of moment which is not agreeable to the general strain of the word of God, and to the principles of the church whereof I am a minister, as specified in the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies. And that what I now print is to the same purport with the usual course of my preaching, I doubt not but all who stately hear me, will do me the justice to acknowledge.

My other motive is, a desire of promoting your edification. It is my comfort that many of you live by the truths of the gospel, and highly prize them. You will not, therefore, be unwilling to view the substance of what you once heard with acceptance. But it is to be feared, that the far greater part of the congregation have need to have the things pertaining to their peace pressed upon them again and again, for a different reason; not because they know them, and therefore love to have them brought to their remembrance, but because they have hitherto heard them without effect. For the sake of both, therefore, I am willing to leave an abiding testimony amongst you. I hereby take each of your consciences to witness, that I am clear of your blood; and that, to the best of my knowledge and ability, I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.

In the choice of the subjects I have selected for publication, I have not been solicitous to comprise a succinct scheme of gospel-doctrine, but have given the preference to such topics, which the peculiar circumstances of the times, and of my hearers, make me desirous might be had in continual remembrance.

The exposition of the third commandment, which was first delivered in your hearing, I afterwards preached (nearer the form in which it now appears) at London; and as it led me to touch on some particulars of a very public and interesting concern, I have given it a place in this volume. And I shall think myself happy indeed, if it may please God to give weight to the testimony of

so obscure a person, with respect to a grievance under which the nation groans.

As long discourses are in many respects inconvenient, I have chosen to publish no more than a brief summary of what you heard more at large from the pulpit. And as I aim to speak plain truths to a plain people, I have purposely avoided any studied ornaments in point of expression, being desirous to accommodate myself to the apprehensions of the most ignorant.

May it please the God of all grace to accompany my feeble endeavours to promote the knowledge of his truth with the powerful influence of his Holy Spirit! And I earnestly entreat all who know how to draw near to a throne of grace by Jesus Christ, to strive mightily in prayer for me, that I may stand fast in the faith, and increase in the knowledge of Jesus the Saviour, and that, for his sake, I may labour, without fear of fainting, in the service to which he has been pleased to call me. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

I am your affectionate friend, and servant in the gospel of Christ,

JOHN NEWTON.

*Olney, January 20, 1767.*

## SERMON XIX.

### GUILT REMOVED, AND PEACE RESTORED.

*O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* PSALM li. 15.

THE history of David is full of instruction. Everything recorded of him affords us either consolation or caution. In his example we see much of the sovereign power and providence of God. When a youth, though the least of his father's house, he was singled out, and called from following sheep, to rule a kingdom. We see him supported through a variety of difficulties, and at length established in his throne, to the amazement and confusion of his enemies. In him likewise we have a striking proof of the evil that is in the heart of man. Who would have thought it, that David, the man so highly favoured, so wonderfully preserved, the man after God's own heart, who, in the time of his distress, could say, "My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God" (Psalm xlii. 2.), that he should be, in an unguarded hour, seduced, surprised, and led captive of the devil! From gazing he proceeds to adultery, from adultery to murder, and at length sinks into such a stupid frame of mind, that an express message from God was needful to convince him of his sin. And in this circumstance we farther see the riches of divine grace and mercy, how tenderly the Lord watches over his sheep, how carefully he brings them back when wandering from him, and with what rich goodness he heals their backslidings, and loves them freely. David was fallen, but not lost. "The thing which he had done displeased the Lord" (2 Sam. xi. 27), yet his loving-kindness and faithfulness were unalterable. He was interested in that covenant, "which is well ordered in all things and sure" (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.); and therefore, when he confessed his sin, the Lord assured him, by his servant Nathan, that "he had put away his sin, and he should not die for it," 2 Sam. xii. 13.

However, though the Lord is thus gracious in passing by the iniquity of his children, yet he will let them know, by sorrowful experience, that "it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against him," Jer. ii. 19. Though he will not cast off, he will chasten; he will withdraw his presence, and suspend his gracious influences; and this to a sensible heart is a heavy punishment. Though David was delivered from the fear of death and hell, he penned this psalm in the bitterness of his soul. He did not consider the Lord as his enemy, but as a friend and a father, whom he had greatly offended. He longed to be reconciled; but could not as yet recover his former confidence. He hoped, indeed, that a time of refreshment would come from his presence; and therefore he continued waiting; but for the present he made heavy complaints, that his

bones were broken, and his mouth stopped. He had lost his strength and life, and found he could not restore himself. He was struck dumb by his late fall; and therefore he breathes out this prayer, “O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.”

From these words I propose to consider that mournful case, which too often happens in the Christian life, when the believer’s mouth is stopped, and his lips closed, so that he cannot shew forth the praises of his God. And in this view,

1. I shall point out to you the persons who have reason to make this complaint.

2. Explain what is implied in their lips being thus shut up.

3. Show you by what means the Lord opens the closed lips. And,

4. I shall observe, that when a person’s lips are thus opened, his mouth, and all that is within him, will certainly shew forth the Lord’s praise. May the Holy Spirit apply the word, and command a blessing upon the whole!

- I. This petition especially suits two sorts of persons:

1. The *backsliding* believer; one who has formerly known the goodness of God; has rested in his love, and rejoiced in his salvation; “has tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Pet. ii. 3), and walked with comfort in the way of his commandment; but at length, by an unguarded conduct, or by building wood, hay, and stubble upon the Lord’s foundation (1 Cor. iii. 11–13), has grieved the good Spirit of God, and he is withdrawn. The Comforter and instructor of his soul is far from him, and therefore he sits in darkness and silence, Lam. i. 16. He only retains a sense of his loss, and can do no more than sigh out this prayer: “O Lord, open thou my lips.”

2. The *doubting* believer; the unbelieving believer (if I may be allowed the expression): —I mean one who has been deeply convinced of sin, and taught by the Spirit of God that there is no salvation but in the Lord Jesus Christ; one who loves the word, and way%, and people of God, who is careful to the utmost of his power to abstain from the evil that is in the world, and esteems “the loving- kindness of the Lord to be better than life” (Psal. lxiii. 3); one at whom the enemy has often thrust sore that he might fall (Psal. cxviii. 13), but the Lord has secretly upheld him through many a bitter hour, and he finds he is not cut oft' yet, though he perhaps expects it every day. Such as these have indeed sufficient ground to say, “If the Lord was not

- on my side, I had been swallowed up long ago,” Psal. cxxiv. 3. They have reason to conclude with David, “By this, if by nothing else, I know that thou favourest me, seeing my enemies, who have assaulted me so continually, have not yet prevailed against me,” Psal. xli. 11. But yet, through a sense of past guilt, a sight of present corruptions, the prevalence of unbelief, the workings of a legal spirit, the want of a clear apprehension of the Lord’s way of

justifying the ungodly, and from the force of Satan's temptations, who is exceeding busy to press all these things upon the heart, their mouths are stopped likewise. They cannot believe, and therefore they cannot speak. However, there are seasons and intervals when they obtain a little glimpse of hope, and then the whole desire of their souls is expressed in the words of my text, "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall, shew forth thy praise."

II. I proceed to consider what may be included in this case, what it is to have the mouth stopped. The persons I have mentioned have the same liberty of speech in common affairs as others; but because they cannot converse freely with him, who, notwithstanding all their doubts and fears, and follies, still maintains a secret hold of their souls they account themselves no better than dumb. They cannot *speak to* the Lord, nor *of* him, nor *for* him, as they wish and ought to do. These are the three heads of their complaint, and therefore they sigh and say, "O Lord open thou my lips

1. Alas! says the believer that has sinned, and lost his strength, "O that it was with me as in times past!" Job xxix. 2. I well remember when I had freedom of access, and found it good to draw near to my God, when I could pour out all my complaints and cares before him, and leave them with him. I remember the time when my heart was overwhelmed within me, and my spirit was burdened, Psal. cxlii. 3. I saw myself a wretched, helpless sinner. Innumerable evils took hold of me. I thought I was marked out for destruction. I found Satan at my right hand, waiting for a permission to seize my soul, and make me his prey for ever, Zech. iii. 1. I looked around, but saw no way to escape, and gave up all for lost. But, O! I remember, when none in heaven or earth could help me, how the Lord drew "near to me in the day of my distress, and said unto my soul, Fear not, I am thy salvation," Lam. iii. 57. He revealed himself as an almighty, suitable Saviour. He said, "Deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom," Job xxxiii. 24. "He brought me out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock," Psal. xl. 2. "He brought me into his banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love. I sat under his shadow with great . delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste," Cant. ii. 3, 4. This was the beginning, but it was not all; many a gracious visit he favoured me with afterwards. O the sweet hours of secret prayer! O the happy communion in which I walked with him all the day long! "Then in the multitude of thoughts within me, his comforts refreshed my soul," Psal. xciv. 19. Then I could smile at Satan's rage, and face a frowning world. Every blessing of common providence was doubly welcome, for I could read his name of love written upon it; and every affliction brought resignation and peace, because I saw my Father's hand in it, and found at a throne of grace renewed strength always suited to my need. Happy

were those times; but, alas! they are gone. I could hardly then persuade myself that I should be moved any more. I little thought there was such desperate wickedness in my heart, that, after so much experience of his goodness, - I should foolishly wander from him again. But, O! what a change have I lived to see! I have grieved that good Spirit of God by which I was sealed, and now I find myself in the hands of my enemies. The Lord hides himself and stands afar off, and I have lost the power of prayer. Those precious promises which once were the joy of my soul, which I could boldly plead at the throne of grace, and say All these are mine, have no longer any power or sweetness; I read them, but I cannot feel them, and my trials and sins, which once I could cast upon my Saviour, and find instant relief, are now a heavy burden, too great for me to bear. Mercies have lost their relish, and afflictions have lost their usefulness, since neither the one nor the other are of force to stir up my soul to prayer. "O Lord, open thou my lips."

I remember likewise, when I had this freedom in speaking with God, how pleasing it was to me to speak of him. My heart was full, and running over with a sense of his goodness, so that it was my meat and drink to say, "Come unto me, all you that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul," Psal. lxxvi. 16. Then the company of his people was delightful indeed. The meanest of his children that would sit and hear me speak of his loving-kindness, was precious to me: I esteemed them the excellent of the earth in whom was all my delight, Psal. xvi. 3. and lv. 14. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company. And I thank God I love them still; but I can neither help them, nor be helped by them, as in times past. In vain they say unto me, Come, sing us one of the songs of Zion. Alas! how can I sing the songs of the Lord in a strange land? My harp is hung upon the willows, my tongue cleaveth to the roof of my mouth, Psal. cxxxvii. 3-5. I dwell in darkness and silence, as those who have been long dead. "O Lord, open thou my lips."

And when I could thus speak to God, and of him, I had likewise liberty to speak for him. I was then very jealous for the Lord of hosts, 1 Kings xix. 10. It wounded my soul to hear his name profaned, to see his commandments broken, and his gospel slighted. I had a tender concern for poor sinners; I could not but wish, that, if possible, every person I met might know what I knew, and feel what I felt. And especially where I had friendship and influence, I was ready to improve it to the best purpose. The love of Christ constrained me to lay myself out for his service, 2 Cor. v. 14. I could not but oppose sin and self-righteousness, and plead the cause of my Saviour upon every occasion. I was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for I felt it to be the power of God unto salvation in my own soul (Rom. i. 16.), and durst recommend it to everyone, as the only balm for sin and sorrow. But now the

crown is fallen from my head: woe unto me that I have sinned, Lam. v. 16. I am shut out from the fountain, and all my streams are dried up. My comforts and my usefulness are declined together. "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise."

Such is the complaint of the backslider in heart, when he is filled with his own ways. And,

2. This, with a little variation, will suit the doubting tempted soul too. These will confess, that the experience I have described is the desire of their hearts. Such communication with God, such a freedom in his ways, such a zeal for his service, is the very thing they mean, when they entreat the Lord to open their lips. And indeed they cannot, they dare not deny, but they have at times had some little tastes of them, otherwise they would not know what I mean. For these things are to the natural man the merest folly imaginable; he understands them not, therefore he despises them; nay, he hates them with a perfect hatred, and opposes them with all his heart. But still they complain under a present burden. One dark hour of temptation blots out all the traces of comfort they have known, and they refuse consolation. They will insist on it, I have neither part nor lot in the matter; I cannot get near him, and I fear I never shall. When I attempt to pray, a sense of my sins and sinfulness stops my mouth. I see the Lord, not upon the golden mercy-seat, but upon the fiery throne of justice, and I am ready to call upon the rocks and mountains to hide me from his presence. When I would commune with his people, I am silenced by that dreadful word, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or to take my covenant into thy mouth?" Psal. 1. 16. When I would bear

my feeble testimony for him in the world, conscience alarms me, and says, "Thou that teachest others, teachest thou not thyself?" Rom. ii. 21. And then "the enemy comes in like a flood" (Isaiah lix. 19.), with "God has forsaken him; persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him," Psal. lxxi. 11. Thus I "spend my days in groaning and water my couch with tears," Psal. vi. 6.

This is a heavy case indeed; and would be insupportable, but that the faithful Shepherd, in a secret unseen way, affords timely succour, and sets bounds to the raging enemy, beyond which he cannot pass. "Hitherto shalt thou come" (Job xxxviii. 11.); thus far thou art permitted to vex, and wound, and tear, "but no farther." The Lord knows our frame, and has promised with every temptation to provide either strength to endure, or a way to escape, 1 Cor. x. 13. Two things are proper to be mentioned for the encouragement of such souls to wait on, and expect deliverance.

The first is, The examples of the saints. Think not your lot strange, as though some new and unheard-of thing had befallen you. Thousands, and ten thousands, now in glory, have tasted, yea drank deeply of this cup before



you. And many yet upon earth, who are now rejoicing in the light of God's countenance, have said in times past, as you say now, "I shall one day perish by the hand of these enemies (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.); the Lord hath cast me quite off, and I shall never live to see his goodness in the land of the living," Psal. lxxiv. 1. Or if you choose scripture-proofs, you need only read the book of Job, the Psalms, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, to be convinced that some whom you number amongst the Lord's most eminent and highly-favoured servants have been reduced to use such expressions as suit your case, no less than if they had been wrote for you alone. Do not they say, "That they were broken with breach upon breach (Job xvi. 14.); that the arrows of God stuck fast in them (Psal. xxxviii. 2.); that the Lord wrote bitter things against them, and counted them his enemies (Job xiii. 26. and xxxii. 10.); that he had shut them up within stone walls, and covered himself with a cloud, that their prayers might not pass through?" Lam. iii. 9. 44. These are but a small part of their complaints; and what can you say more than this?

Again, consider the precious promises of the word. Are they not expressly directed to you? Do you account yourself a backslider? "Return unto me, ye backsliding children, and I will receive you, saith the Lord," Jer. iii. 14, 22, Do you think yourself a sinner of uncommon size? yet, saith the Lord, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Isa. i. 18. Do you say your neck is as an iron sinew, and your brow brass? yet hear the word of the

Lord, "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness. I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off," Isa. xlvi. 12, 13. Is there something peculiarly dreadful in your case, something that you could hardly be prevailed on to intrust to your dearest friend? yet be not afraid; for Truth has said. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," Matth. xii. 31. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God for he will abundantly pardon," Isa. lv. 7. But still, when we have said all, we are but miserable comforters. Even with the word of God in our mouths, we speak too often in vain. It is the Lord alone that can open the lips. And, O! that this may be the happy opportunity of his gracious appearance in favour of all here present, that our wounds may be healed, and our tongues unloosed to proclaim his praise! Lift up your hearts to him, while I endeavour to shew you by what means, or in what manner, the Lord is pleased to open the lips that have been long closed. This is the third particular I proposed to consider from my text.

III. I say then, that when the Lord is about to open the lips, he proceeds by the following steps:

1. "He opens the eyes." Wears often in a similar case with Hagar in the

wilderness. The water was spent in the bottle, and she sat down in despair. There was a well or fountain close to her, sufficient to have supplied her with water to her life's end; but she saw it not till God opened her eyes, Gen. xxi. 15 —19. Just so, many a poor soul is distressed, and says, My stock is spent; I had but little grace at the best, and, alas! that little is gone. And now, if the Lord should ask some hard thing, would you not do it to obtain a supply? You would willingly take a long journey, or part with all your wealth, to have grace abounding in your hearts; but you know you cannot expect help in this way. It is true, all contrivances of our own will have no effect; but, blessed be God, they are as needless as they would be useless. We need not dig in the earth, nor climb the skies, nor cross the seas; our remedy is near, Rom. x. 6–8. We need no costly offerings of silver or gold; our remedy is cheap. Come, pore no longer upon your empty bottle, but look to the fountain, the river, the ocean of all grace. May the Lord open your eyes, as he did the eyes of Elisha's servant (2 Kings vi. 17.), and I will undertake to point you to an object that shall answer all your wants. Look unto the Lord Jesus Christ; look unto him as he hung naked, wounded, bleeding, dead, and forsaken upon the cross. Look unto him again as he now reigns in glory, possessed of all power in heaven and in earth, with thousands of thousands of saints and angels worshipping before him, and ten thousand times ten thousand ministering unto him; and then compare your sins with his blood, your wants with his fulness, your unbelief with his faithfulness, your weakness with his strength, your inconstancy with his everlasting love. If the Lord opens the eyes of your understanding, you would be astonished at the comparison. Would you compare a small grain of sand upon the shore with the massy mountains which hide their heads in the clouds, and spread their roots from sea to sea? or the spark of a glow-worm with the noon-day's sun? yet there is less disproportion between these, than between the utmost capacity of your desires and wants, and the immense resources provided for you, in the righteousness, compassion, and power of our dear Redeemer. "He is able to save to the uttermost" (Heb. vii. 25.); and all our trouble arises chiefly from this, that our eyes are holden, so that we do not know him, Luke xxiv. 16. Therefore the first step towards opening the lips is to open our eyes, that we may see him, and look upon him by such a sight as unloosed the tongue of unbelieving Thomas, and constrained him to cry out, "My Lord, and my God!" John xx. 28.

2. When the eyes are thus opened, the Lord, in the next place, and by that as a means, "opens the ear." When Christ is out of sight, we are deaf to all the calls, invitations, and promises of the scripture. But a believing view of him who died that we might live, rouses the attention, and makes us willing and able to hear what the Lord will speak to his people, Psal. lxxxv. 8. And

what does he say from the cross? “Look unto me, and be ye saved,” Isaiah xiv. 22. “If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me,” John xii. 32. “Behold my hands, my feet, my pierced side; all this I bore for you,” John xx. 27. “Be not afraid, only believe,” Mark v. 36. “O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?” Matth. xiv. 31. “See, sinner, how I have loved thee, I have trodden the wine-press alone,” Isaiah lxiii. 3. “I have destroyed death, and him that had the power of death,” Heb. ii. 14. “There is hence forth no condemnation to them that believe in me,” Rom. viii. 1. And what does he say from his kingdom? “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not,” Luke xxii. 32. “For a season you have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice,” John xvi. 22. “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out,” John vi. 37. “I am the first and the last;—that was dead and am alive. I keep the keys of death and hell, and save whom I will,” Rev. i. 17. 18. “Cast thy burden upon me, I will sustain thee,” Psal. lv. 22. “I will take away thy iniquity,” Micah vii. 19. “Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee,” Matth ix. 2. “Go in peace, and sin no more,” John viix, 11. “*My sacrifice, my God,* what words are these!

3. By opening the eye to see his excellence and power, and the ear to hear his gracious words, he, in the next place, “opens the heart.” He breaks the prison doors, forces for himself an entrance, and sets the prisoner at liberty. He touches the rock, and the waters flow, Psal. lxxviii. 20. Now a true and filial repentance takes place; now sin appears exceedingly sinful indeed. There was a sorrow before, but it was fruitless and ineffectual; but the sight of him who was pierced for our sins, and the welcome sound of pardon proclaimed in the conscience, produce a sorrow after a godly sort, a repentance never to be repented of. Thus it was w<sup>7</sup>ith the woman who washed our Lord’s feet (Luke vii. 38. 47.); she had been a great sinner, much was forgiven her, and therefore she loved much. Thus it was with Peter: he had been a grievous backslider; he had been with Jesus upon the mount, and saw the excellent glory; he was stout in his protestation, “Though all men deny thee, yet will not I: “but he shrunk at the voice of a girl, and said, <sup>u</sup> I know not the man.” When the servants spoke to him, he cursed and swore; but when Jesus looked upon him, he wept, Luke xxii, 61. 62. Do you think our Lord looked upon him with disdain and indignation? rather with a look of love; a look that at once convinced him of his sin, and gave him to understand that the Lord pitied and forgave him. This look broke his heart in pieces. He went out and wept bitterly. And afterwards, though greatly humbled as to confidence in himself, yet, when asked the question, he could boldly appeal to the Searcher of hearts, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,” John xxi. 17.

And when the eyes, the ears, the heart, are thus opened; when the understanding is enlightened, the will engaged, and the affections inflamed, the cure is wrought. Then the lips will open of course, and the mouth be filled with thanksgiving and praise. O that it would please the Lord to give to me, and to each of you, a clearer knowledge of this blessed change from heart-felt experience, than is in the power of words (of my poor words especially) to describe: "Come, my friends, let us return unto the Lord: for he hath wounded, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up," Hosea vi. 1. Verily we are all guilty in this matter; we have all provoked him by unbelief, and wandered from his good way; and therefore we live so far below our privileges, and are so often heavy and sorrowful, when we have in him grounds of continual joy. Now, let us unite in this prayer, "O Lord, open thou our lips, display thy power in the midst of us, heal all our breaches, rend the vail of our unbelief, blot out the thick clouds of our sins, cleanse us from all our iniquities and idols, and teach our stammering tongues, and barren hearts, to shew forth the praise of thy abundant goodness."

I proceed to observe, in the last place,

IV. That if the Lord is pleased to answer our desire, and to open your lips in this manner, then you will surely praise him. You will praise him with your mouths, and in your lives; you will thankfully acknowledge his mercy, his power, and his wisdom.

1. You will praise his mercy. Is the cooling stream welcome to the thirsty soul? is a reprieve acceptable to a poor condemned malefactor? Still more welcome is a sense of pardoning love to a soul that has felt the evil and effects of sin. What! to be taken from the dunghill (1 Sam. ii. 8), and made a companion with princes! to have all our guilt and complaints removed at once! to be snatched as it were from the brink of hell, and placed in the very suburbs of heaven! to be able to say, "O Lord, thou wast [justly] angry with me [and I went mourning under a sense of thy displeasure]; but [now] thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me" (Isa. xii. 1.)! is not this a mercy? especially considering how undeserving we are of the smallest favour! And farther, the way in which it was conveyed! that the pardon, though free to us, is a pardon "bought with blood:" that it cost the Lord Jesus his life, his soul, to effect that blessed reconciliation in which we are beginning to rejoice! still more, that all we can now receive of his love is but a taste, a small thing, in comparison of what he has reserved for us! O what mercy is here! O what thanks does it call for! "O Lord, open thou our lips, and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise."

2. You will praise his power. I thought says the poor soul at such a time, I was fallen so low that there was no help. The more I toiled and laboured in

my own strength, the farther the blessing seemed from me. I know from experience, that none but an almighty arm could relieve me. Creatures, means, and contrivances, I had tried, and tried again, but found them all physicians of no value. But now, "The right hand of the Lord has done wonderfully, the right hand of the Lord has brought mighty things to pass," Psal. cxviii. 15, 16. What shall I say? "He hath both spoken himself, and also hath done it," Isa. xxxviii. 15. The work is his; to him be all the glory. I got not this victory by my own bow (Psal. xlv. 6), neither did my own arm save me; "but the Lord himself has been pleased to shew the exceeding greatness of his mighty power in my behalf," Eph. i. 19. Therefore, "not unto us, but unto thy name, O Lord, be the glory and the praise," Psal. cxv. 1.

3. You will praise his wisdom. "What I do (said our Lord to Peter), thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,"

John xiii. 7. The mourning soul often asks the question with David, "I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forsaken me? why go I mourning because of the enemy?" Psal. xlii. 9. When the Lord turns your mourning into joy, you shall know why. You will then see that there was a need (1 Pet. i. 6.) of all these things. It is to shew you what is in your hearts, to mortify the spirit of self-righteousness, "to teach you, that without him you can do nothing" (John xv. 5.), to make you wise and experienced against Satan's devices; to give you a tender sympathy and fellow-feeling in the sufferings and infirmities of your brethren, and to enable you to encourage and comfort others (2 Cor. i. 4.) who shall be hereafter in your case, by relating what you have seen and known yourself in your various conflicts and strivings against sin. These are some of the reasons why the Lord suffers his dear children to groan being burdened, and sometimes permits their enemies to gain a short advantage over them, that he may humble and prove them (Deut. viii. 2—16), in order to do them good in their latter end. And, O! with what wisdom is all this appointed! A little of it we may see at present, but we shall not have a complete view till we get safe home. Then to look back upon the way by which he led us through this wilderness, will furnish matter for eternal praise.

Farther, not only your mouths, but your lives shall praise him. What is the language of a believing heart, when the Lord pardons his sins, and binds up his wounds? It is this, "Now Lord, I am thine, thy vows are upon me, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth," Psal. cxvi. 14, 16.; and xxxi. 5. "Shall I continue in sin because grace has abounded? God forbid!" Rom. vi. 1. "I am crucified with Christ, crucified to the world, and the world to me," Gal. ii. 20; and vi. 14. "The love of Christ constrains me," 2 Cor. v. 14. "The time past is sufficient to have lived in vanity; henceforth I am the Lord's," 1 Pet. iv. 3. "Has he bound me by his tender mercies, to present myself, body and soul to his service? (Rom. xii. 1.) here, O Lord, I offer my whole self, all

that I am, and all that I have, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to thee. O let me never, never, wander from thee again, but walk in the light, as thou art in the light, and have communion with thee here below, till thou shalt remove me out of the reach of sin and sorrow for ever," 1 John i. 7.

If there are any here who have neither known the loving-kindness of the Lord, nor mourned under the sense of his displeasure, I am sure your lips are closed to this hour. And should you die thus incapable of praising the God who made you, and the grace which has brought the sound of the gospel to your ears, it were better for you that you had never been born, Matth. xxvi. 24. You have much reason to cry out, "O Lord, open thou my lips." Open my eyes to see my danger, to see the evil of my nature and life. Open my lips to confess my wickedness. Open my heart to receive thy word, that I likewise may bear a part in the praises thy people pay thee, and not perish (as without thy mercy I must do) with a lie in my right hand, Isa. xlv. 20. Consider, the time is short (1 Cor. vii. 29); death is near, and may be sudden. May the Lord enable you to consider the things belonging to your peace, before they are hid from your eyes 1 Luke, xix. 42.

And you, my friends, who at present enjoy the light of God's countenance, who know your sins are forgiven (1 John, ii. 12.) for his name's sake, and have a happy freedom of access at a throne of grace, O be mindful of your privileges; beware of sin, beware of self, beware of Satan. Your enemy envies you your liberty; he watches you with subtlety and malice; he spreads snares for your feet; he desires to have advantage of you, "that he may sift you as wheat," Luke xxii. 31. Therefore be upon your guard, be humble, make much of secret prayer, keep close to the scriptures of God: by the words of his lips you shall be preserved from the paths of the destroyer, Psalm xvii. 4. Attend diligently upon the ordinances, and speak often one to another (Mai. iii. 16.), in love and faithfulness, of what the Lord has done and prepared for you, and of what manner of persons you ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, 2 Pet. iii. 11. Thus you shall be kept safe from evil. Jesus has prayed for you, that your faith may not fail, Luke xxii. 32. Fix your eye (Heb. xii. 2) and your heart upon him, as he that must do all for you, all in you, and all by you. And he has said, "Yet a little while, and behold I come quickly," Rev. iii. 11. Hold fast that which thou hast. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus," Rev. ii. 10, and xxii. 20.