

THE SAINTS' LOVE TO GOD

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*"Oh love the LORD, all you His saints."
Psalm 31:23.*

DO we, if we are called the saints of the Lord, need to be exhorted to love Him? If we do, shame upon us! And we do, I am quite sure, so let us be ashamed and confounded that it should ever be necessary to urge us to love our Lord! Why, after He has done so much for us and manifested such wondrous love to such unworthy ones as we are, we ought to love Him as naturally as sparks of fire ascend towards the sun, or as the waters of the river run towards the sea. It should be our second and higher nature to always love the Lord without the slightest prompting. What the Law of God required, the Gospel should have worked in us, namely, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength! But, Brothers and Sisters, we need this exhortation—we feel that we do. Well, then, let us take it home to ourselves and let us hear it as though it had been spoken personally to each one of us who are the Lord's saints—"O love the Lord." Do nothing else just now. Bid every other thought be gone and every other emotion, too. Let your affections be graciously melted and let them all run in this one blessed channel—towards God—"O love the Lord, all you His saints."

Remember that the man who here exhorts the saints to love their Lord was one who had been enduring very sharp trials. This Psalm is, in many respects, a very sad one. If you will read it through, you will see that David had been afflicted by slanderous and other cruel enemies. And yet, while he was still suffering from their attacks and also fearing that he was cut off from the Lord's Presence, he still said, "O love the Lord, all you His saints," for my Lord is so good that I will speak well of Him even when He smites me. He is such a gracious God that I can truly say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Though He may smite me ever so hard, yet will I still adore Him. I will still bless and magnify His name as long as I have any being."

If a tried child of God could talk like that, how ought we, who have comparatively few trials, to love the Lord? If your pathway has been smooth of late—if temporal mercies have abounded—if spiritual comforts have been continued to you, then, O you happy saints, love the Lord! If David, when so sorely tried, could do so, how fervently should you do it, who stand upon the mountaintops of full assurance and walk in the bright sunlight of confidence in God! I address myself to all here who have really been set apart unto God and who realize that they are among the Lord's saints. And I repeat to them this exhortation of David, "O love the Lord, all you His saints."

I. So first, let us remember that THIS EXHORTATION REFERS TO EACH PERSON OF THE DIVINE TRINITY.

We can never understand how Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be Three and yet One. For my part, I have long ago given up any desire to understand this great mystery, for I am perfectly satisfied that if I *could* understand it, it would not be true, because God, from the very nature of things, must be incomprehensible! He can no more be contained within the narrow bounds of our finite understanding than the Atlantic Ocean could be held in the hollow of a child's hand. We bless Him that He is one. As Moses said, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord," yet we also bless Him that Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each in His separate Personality, should be worshipped as God.

O then, you saints, *love God the Father!* We sometimes meet with Christians who are so ignorant as scarcely to give the same degree of love to the Father as they give to the Son. They foolishly suppose that the Son has done something to *make* the Father love us. That is not the belief of any Spirit-taught children of God, for we say, with good John Kent—

*“Twas not to make Jehovah’s love
Towards the sinner flame,
That Jesus, from His Throne above
A suffering Man became.
‘Twas not the death which He endured
Nor all the pangs He bore,
That God’s eternal love procured,
For God was Love before.”*

It was because of His love that the Father gave His Son! It was not the Son who came to make that love possible! O Christians, love the Father, for He chose you! Before the earth was, the Father concentrated His love upon you and gave you to Christ to be His portion and His reward. Why did He choose you? He might well enough have passed you by, as He passed by so many others—but, inasmuch as He has chosen you in Christ before the foundation of the world, love Him, I pray you! In choosing you, the Father adopted you into His family and gave you a name and a place among His sons and daughters. If you are this day children of the great Father, it is because He has taken you out from among the rest of mankind and has made you “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” It is the Father, too, who has given you the nature as well as the name and the position of children, for He “has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away.” And He “has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” For your election unto everlasting life, for your salvation by Christ Jesus, for your regeneration by the Holy Spirit, for your adoption into the family of God, “O love the Lord, all you His saints!” I know that you do, but I want you to realize it afresh just now. Let your soul swim as in a sea of love and each one say, “My Father, my God, my own God, I love You! My soul exults at the very thought of Your great love to me which has made my love to You possible!”

And then, O you saints, *love God the Son!* I know that you do this, also, for there is not a Peter among us who, if Christ said to Him, “Do you love Me?” would not reply, “Lord, You know all things: You know that I love You.” How shall I speak of what God the Son has done for us? Think of the Glory that He left and of the shame that He endured for our sakes! Picture Him hanging at a woman’s breast at Bethlehem and afterwards hanging on a Cross at Calvary! Let your eyes lovingly gaze upon Him in the weakness of His Infancy and then in the greater weakness of His death-agony—and remember that He suffered all this for you! For you the crown of thorns! For you the spittle on His cheeks! For you the plucking of His hair! For you the accursed lash that scourged His sacred shoulders! For you the nails, the sponge, the vinegar, the gall, the spear, the tomb—all for you! “O love the Lord, all you His saints,” as you think of His amazing love to you! I would almost ask you to come to those dear feet of His and to do as the woman who was a sinner did—to wash His feet with your tears and to wipe them with the hairs of your head, while you might softly sing—

*“Love and grief my heart dividing,
With my tears His feet I’ll bathe,
Constant still in faith abiding
Life deriving from His death.”*

And then, O you saints, I must not forget to dwell upon the thought that you must *love God the Holy Spirit!* Never let us forget Him, or speak of Him, as some do, as, “It,” for the Holy Spirit is not, “It,” or talk of Him as though He were a mere influence, for the Holy Spirit is Divine and is to be revered and loved equally with the Father and the Son! It was that blessed Spirit who quickened us when we were dead in trespasses and sins! It was He who illuminated us and removed our darkness and, since that time, it has been He who has taken of the things of Christ and revealed them to us. He has been our Comforter to cheer us and our Instructor to teach us and, most wonderful of all, He dwells in us! I have often said that I do not know which mystery to admire the more—the Incarnation of the Son of God, or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! For Christ to take our nature upon Him was, doubtless, marvelous condescension, but that only lasted for a little other 30 years. But the Holy Spirit comes and dwells, century after century, in successive generations of His people, abiding and working in the hearts of men. O you saints, love the Lord the Spirit!

So, gathering up all that I have said, let us adore the mystic Three in One and, more than that, let us love the Lord, let us give our highest affection to Him who was, and is, and is to come, the almighty God, Father, Son, and Spirit!

II. Then, in the second place, note that THIS EXHORTATION MAY BE UNDERSTOOD IN THE FULLEST CONCEIVABLE SENSE—"O love the Lord, all you His saints."

You may pull up the sluices of your being and let all your life-floods flow forth in this sacred stream, for you cannot love God too much. Some passions of our nature may be exaggerated and, towards certain objects, they may be carried too far—but the heart, when it is turned towards God—can never be too warm, nor too excited, nor too firmly fixed on the Divine Object! "O love the Lord, all you His saints."

Put the emphasis upon that sweet word, love—*love the Lord as you cannot love anyone or anything else*. Husband, you love your wife. Parent, you love your children. Children, you love your parents. And all of you love your friends and it is well that you do. But you must spell all other love in little letters, but spell LOVE to God in the largest capitals you can find! Love Him intensely, love the Lord, all you His saints, without any limit to your love!

Next, *love Him with a deep, abiding principle of love*. There is a certain kind of human love which burns very quickly, like brushwood, and then dies out. So, there are some Christians who seem to love the Lord by fits and starts, when they get excited, or at certain special seasons. But I pray you, Beloved, to let your love be a deep-seated and lasting fire. What if I compare it to the burning in the very heart of a volcano? It may not always be in eruption, but there is always a vehement heat within—and when it does burst forth, oh, what heaves there are, what seething, what boiling, what flaming and what torrents of lava all around! There must always be the fire in the heart, even when it is somewhat still and quiet. Love the Lord with a deep, calm, thoughtful, well-grounded affection, for, if you do not, excitements may go as easily as they come, frames and feelings may change—and your love will turn out to be evanescent and anything but intense.

Then, after that, *love the Lord with an overwhelming emotion*. You will not always feel like that and you need not wish to do so—the human mind is not capable of continually feeling, to an overwhelming degree, the emotion of love to God. There may be a slackening of conscious emotion, for we have to go to our business and to be occupied with many cares and with thoughts that, necessarily, claim our attention. But we do not love the Lord any less because we are not so conscious of our love as at others times. Still, you must have your times when you are conscious of the emotion of love to God. Set apart special seasons when you may pray the Lord to come to you in an unusual manner. On such occasions you do not want to do anything but just love Him and give your soul full liberty to gaze upon the unspeakable beauties of your God. Oh, it is delightful to be utterly carried away with this emotion! There are some of the saints of God who have found that this emotion has been too strong for them and they have had to cry to the Lord, "Hold! Hold! For I am but an earthen vessel and if more of this amazing love is poured into me, I shall be unable to bear it!"

There have been very remarkable experiences with some of the saints when this sacred passion has completely overpowered them. They have been forgetful of all other things and have seemed absent-minded and abstracted—whether in the body, or out of the body, they could not tell. Well, Beloved, indulge that emotion all you can! If you cannot get the highest degree of it, get as much of it as you can. Have the principle of love and then ask the Lord to give you the emotion which arises from it. Yes, dear Friends, I would go still further and join you in praying that our love to our God might come to be a very passion of the soul—a passion that can never be satisfied until we get to Him and are with Him forever! That is the true love which grows so eager and impatient that it counts life a banishment so long as it is spent down here. It is well with your soul when it sometimes cries out, "Why is His chariot so long in coming?"—when you can truly sing that blessed verse—

*"My heart is with Him on His Throne,
And ill can brook delay!
Each moment listening for the voice,
'Rise up, and come away.'"*

For, surely, the spouse desires the return of her Husband! Does not the boy at school long for the holidays when he may get back to his parents' embrace?

And if we really love the Lord, we shall feel that passionate longing to be with Him and, in the strength of it, if we must tarry here for a while, we shall feel that we can do anything for Him "till the day breaks and the shadows flee away."

III. Having thus shown you that this exhortation is applicable to each Person of the Divine Trinity and that it may be understood in the most emphatic sense, now let me say, in the third place, that IT HAS A THOUSAND ARGUMENTS TO ENFORCE IT.

Brothers and Sisters, the short time we have for this service will not allow me to mention many of these reasons; but this is my comfort—that *a soul that truly loves God does not need any reasons for loving Him*. We have an old proverb which says that “love is blind.” And certainly, love is never very argumentative. It overcomes a man so that he is completely carried away by it and he who really loves God, will feel that this supreme passion puts aside the necessity for cold reasoning. Hear could you, by logic, produce love even between two human beings? You may prove that you ought to love, but “ought to love” and love, itself, are two very different things! Where true love is, however, it finds a thousand arguments for its own increase.

This love, to which God’s saints are exhorted, is in every way deserved. *Think of the excellence of His Character whom you are bid to love*. God is such a perfect Being that I feel now that, altogether apart from anything He has done for me, I love Him because He is so good, so just, so holy, so faithful, so true. There is no one of His attributes that is not exactly what it ought to be. If I look at His dear Son, I see that His Character is so gloriously balanced that I wonder why even those who deny His Godhead do not worship such a Character as His, for it is absolutely unique. When I think of the Character of the ever-blessed Spirit—His patience and His wisdom—His tenderness and His love to us—I cannot help loving Him. Yes, Beloved, we must love Father, Son and Spirit, for never had human hearts such an Object to love as the Divine Trinity in Unity.

If you will let your mind specially dwell upon God’s great goodness, surely you must feel the throbs of strong affection towards Him. What is God? “God is Love.” That short word comprehends all! He is a great God, but He is as gracious as He is great. We might conceive of a god who was a great tyrant, but it was impossible that our God should be one. “The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works.” He is as full of goodness as the sun is full of light and as full of Divine Grace as the sea is full of water. And all that He has, He delights to give out to others. It is His happiness and glory to make His creatures happy—and even when He is stern and terrible, it is only of necessity that He is so because it cannot be for the good of the universe which He governs that sin should be lightly treated or allowed to go unpunished. God, my God, You are altogether lovely! And where the heart is in a right condition, it must love You! I should think that the anatomist, taking each bone to pieces and observing the singular adaptation of every joint to promote the comfort of the creature—I should think that the naturalist, observing all the habits of birds and beasts and fishes, and seeing what wonderful delight, upon the whole, is enjoyed by such creatures—must often feel that God is a blessed God!

Certainly, I cannot walk the glades beneath the forest and listen to the singing of the birds, and observe how even the insects in the grass leap up for very joy, without saying, “He is a blessed God, indeed, who has made such a beautiful world as this!” Some men and women seem to think that this world was made for them and they talk about flowers wasting their sweetness upon the desert air, but let them gaze upon the marvels of beauty in the fair woods and let them look at the myriad ants which build their cities there. They appear to be happy enough, in their way, and to be bringing some honor and glory to the God that made them and this beautiful world in which they dwell. With all the stain of sin there is upon it, you may find many places where—

*“Every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile.”*

Standing on the brow of some high hill and beholding the lovely scenery all around you, you might well burst forth in the lofty language attributed by Milton to our first father, Adam, but if you do not speak thus to His praise, “O love the Lord, all you His saints,” for He is a blessed Creator!

Then think of the Providence of God— especially His Providence to you. I cannot tell the various ways in which the Lord has led each one of you, but I can speak for myself. If there is any man under Heaven who has reason to love the Lord for every step of the way in which he has been led, I am that man! But I hope there are many others here who could say just the same if I gave them the opportunity. Notwithstanding all your trials and troubles, dear Brothers and Sisters, has not the Lord been a good God to you? I have heard many strange things in the course of my life, but I have never heard one of the Lord’s servants, when he came to die, regret that he had taken Him for a Master. Nor have I ever heard

one of them rail at Him because of even the heaviest blows of His hand, but, like Job, they have said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Yes, as much blessed when He takes away as when He gives!

But, my Brothers and Sisters, if I call to your remembrance the great mystery of the atoning Sacrifice of Christ—if I only utter these words—“Incarnation”—“Substitution”—“Justification”—“Sanctification”—without dwelling upon the great Truths of God that they represent, surely they must awaken responsive echoes in your spirit and, as far as your faith has grasped these precious things, you must feel that you have many weighty reasons why you should love the Lord!

I must pass on to remark that another reason for loving the Lord is that *it is such a pleasant and profitable exercise*. If David had said, “Dread the Lord’s anger, fear the Lord as a slave fears the lash,” that would have been a crushing, weakening, sorrowful message. That is not what you are bid to do, but, “O love the Lord, all you His saints.” If it had merely been said, “Obey the Lord, whether you do it cheerfully or not; just do what you are told to do”—well, that is a poor sort of religion that consists in a formal round of performances and nothing more! If it had then said, “Submit to the Lord: you cannot do otherwise, for He is your Master”—well, we should have been obliged to do it, but it would have been cold work and there would have been no comfort to be derived from it. If it had been written, “Understand the Lord,” we might have given up the task in despair, for how can the finite comprehend the Infinite? But when it is written, “O love the Lord”—why, one of the most delightful exercises of the human heart is to love! Many who have had no other sources of happiness, have found great joy in domestic love. And those who have been denied domestic love have found a sweet relief of their grief in the love of benevolence towards the poor. That heart may well be wretched that has no one to love!

I have heard of a rich nobleman who had large estates, but whose life was a constant misery to him, and who, in sheer despair, was about to drown himself in a canal. But, as he was going, a little boy plucked his coat and asked him for a few pence. He looked in the face of the little fellow and noticed that his face was pinched with poverty and hunger. And the nobleman said to him, “Where do you live?” and the boy led him into a dreary place where his mother lay stretched upon the bed, dying of starvation, and his father, looking like a ghost, was scarcely able to move. The nobleman went off to various shops, made several purchases and returned and fed these poor people! And, as he saw how great was their joy as he supplied their needs, he said to himself, “There is something worth living for, after all!” That benevolent love which had led him to feed the hungry, had given him back some joy in his life! If this is the result of love to our fellow creatures, how much more must it be the effect of our love to our God! If you want to be happy and to do the best thing that is possible in your whole life, love your God! When you want to have a season of ecstatic bliss, this is the way to it—by the road of love to God you will get to the purest, highest joys that can be known even in Heaven itself! Now that you have this blessed secret communicated to you, make use of it and love your God because it is such a pleasant and profitable exercise!

Let us love the Lord, next, *because it is so beneficial to do so*. The man who loves God is delivered from the tyranny of idols—and idols are great tyrants. Suppose you make an idol of your child—you directly have a tyrant. Suppose you make an idol of your money—there is not a more grim tyrant even in Hell than Mammon is! Do you make an idol of other people’s opinion of you? The poor galley slave who is flogged at every stroke of the laborious oar, is free in comparison with the man who lives upon the breath of popularity, who craves the esteem of his fellow men and is afraid and trembles if they censure him. Whatever idol you have, you will be the slave of that idol, but, dear Friend, if you love God, you are free! The love of God makes men true and, making them true, it also makes them bold—and making them bold, it makes them truly free!

Moreover, *to love God is the way to be cleansed from sin*. I mean that the love of God always drives out the love of sin. The one who really loves the Lord, when tempted to sin, cries with Joseph, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” Every act of sin arises out of the absence or the decline of the love of God, but perfect love to God leads to the perfect life with God.

Love to God will also strengthen you in the time of trial. Love will bear His will without repining, will endure bereavements and the loss of worldly substance and, even when the suffering saint lies panting on the bed of sickness, or on the bed of death, love will enable Him to sing—

*“You, at all times, will I bless!
Having You, I all possess.*

*How can I bereaved be
Since I cannot part with Thee?"*

And, then, *love to God will also strengthen you for service.* A man is strong to serve his God, spiritually, just in proportion as he loves God. Love laughs at what men call impossibilities! Perhaps someone here says, "I could never go abroad as a missionary, leaving my native land and living among heathens." Brother, you could do it if you had love enough. Another says, "I could never spend my whole life in the back slums of London among the filthy and the ragged, trying to raise them up! I recoil from such work." Brother, you would not recoil from it, but you would rejoice in it if you had more love. There is a power in love to God, which makes that pleasant which, without love, would have been irksome and painful—a power which makes a man bow down his shoulders to carry the Cross and then finds the Cross grow into a seraph's wings enabling him to mount up toward his God! Only love God more, Brother, and you can do anything! You know that if a thing is very hard, you only need to get something that is harder and it will go through it, so, if the work is hard, get more love to Christ and you will be able to accomplish it, whatever it may be!

I might continue to give you reasons for loving the Lord, but I will only give you one more and that is, *it is most ennobling.* He who loves God is certainly akin to the holy angels, for this is what they do. He is also akin to glorified saints, for this is what they do. He is also akin to the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, for this is what He does. The three Persons of the Divine Trinity delight in one Another and when *we* delight in Them, we have fellowship with Them as well as with one another. "God is love and He that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him." The less love you have to God, the lower is your rank among His saints—and the more love you have to Him, the higher is your rank! May we all know, to the fullest extent possible, what it is to be ennobled by being filled with love to our Lord!

Now, having given you all these reasons why we should love the Lord—and really I have only skimmed the surface of the subject as the swallow touches the brook and is up and away again—I want to propose to my Brothers and Sisters in Christ something which I hope will be congenial to them. It is this—O LOVE THE LORD, ALL YOU HIS SAINTS!

Sit there and feel that He loves you! Sit there, and love Him and then say to yourself, "*Now, if I really do love the Lord, I must do something to prove it.*" Every now and then I like to do something for the Lord which I would not have anybody else know, for that would spoil it—something which I do not do for you, nor for my wife and children, nor for myself, but purely and wholly for God. I think we ought to have something in our purse which is not to be given even for the winning of souls, or the relief of the poor, or the comfort of the sick—though these are most important things which must not be neglected—but something which shall be for God alone. I like to think of that woman breaking the alabaster box and pouring out the precious ointment upon the Lord Jesus Christ. There was Judas, the traitor, who shook his head and said that it might have been sold for much and given to the poor—he being the representative of the poor and intending to see that a portion of the money should remain adhering to his own palms! But the woman had no thought of pleasing Judas, or Peter, or anybody but the Lord Jesus Christ whom she loved so intensely!

Cannot you, Beloved, select something which you can do out of love to Him? What can I suggest to you? Is there some sin that still lurks within your heart? If so, hunt it out and destroy it for Christ's sake! Fling down the gage of battle and say that you will contend against the evil thing, in the name of God, with this as your war cry, "For the love of Christ!" You will get the mastery over it in that way. And when you have done that, is there not something that you could give distinctly to the Lord? Have you ever done that? If not, you have missed a very pure form of happiness and I think that love to God suggests that we should sometimes do this—telling nobody about it, but keeping it entirely to ourselves. Cannot you also think of some service which you could render distinctly to God? It is a very wonderful thing that God should ever accept any service at our hands! It is thought to be a great act of condescension when a king or queen accepts a little wild flower from some country child, yet these is not much cause for wonder in that! But it is a marvelous condescension when God accepts the services even of cherubim and seraphim—and it is truly amazing that He should be willing to accept anything from *us*!

Is there not something, my Sister, that you can do over and above what you have been doing—something, perhaps, which you do not quite like the thought of doing? Yet you mean to do it and you will like to do it because you will do it out of love to your Lord. Do not neglect anything that has now become a part of your duty, but I want you to do something more than that—not that we can ever do more than our duty, for when we have done all, we shall still be only

unprofitable servants to our great Lord and Master—and, in all that we do, let this be our highest motive, “We want to do something altogether and especially for our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Shall I suggest something else? You know that there is nothing which pleases our Lord more than when we try to be like Him. Have not you, father, been greatly pleased when you have seen your little ones imitating your way of walking and your way of talking? Yes, and our Lord loves to see Himself reproduced in us, even though it is in a very childlike way and more like a caricature than a true image. For instance, He is very great at forgiving those who have offended Him. Is there somebody with whom you have been out at elbows for a while? Then, for love of your Lord, seek out that somebody—I do not know who it may be—a former friend, perhaps—possibly a child, or a brother. Seek him out. Go and find him. “Oh, no,” you say, “he must come half-way to meet me!” No, you go all the way, dear Brother, for the love of Christ. You would not do it for anybody else, but you can go all the way for Christ’s sake! I remember two Christian men who had been greatly at variance one day, but they both happened to remember the text, “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” So each of them started off to go to his friend’s house and they did meet half-way. That is how it ought to be, but still, if the other one does not come to meet you—that is the very reason why, for the Lord’s sake, you should go all the way to find him!

Then is there somebody who has never quarreled with you, but who is a very objectionable person and a very ungodly person about whom you have always felt, “I should not like to have anything to do with that person”? Yet, perhaps, God means to bless a word from you to that man’s salvation—will you not try to bring him to Christ? You know that there are many others who will look after the very pleasant people. We are always glad to bring them with us to hear the sermon and we can talk to them about Christ because if they do not like it, they will not say so, for they are so gentlemanly or so ladylike. There are always plenty of people willing to go after *them*, so will you not try to take up one of those hedgehog sort of people that nobody else cares to handle? If he pricks your hands, you can say, “Ah, my Lord was pierced far deeper than this for my sake! I am glad to bear the sharp cuts and hard words for His sake—the more there are of them, the better I like it, for I feel that I am bearing all for His sake.” You know that when you have something to do for a friend, you like it to be something big. If you love him very much and he says, “I want you to promise to do such-and-such a thing for me,” you hardly like it when it turns out to be some insignificant thing scarcely worth mentioning. You say, “No, no, no, I have such ardent affection for you that if you had asked some very hard thing, I would have been only too pleased to do it!” Well now, try to do for your Lord Jesus Christ something which will cost you much—perhaps a good deal of pain, or the overcoming of strong natural tendencies—and do it for His sake.

Perhaps you are called to suffer persecution for Christ’s sake. Well, I have told you this story before, but I will tell it again. There was once a king’s son who came down to a country which ought to have been his home, but it was full of traitors and rebels against him who would not receive him. They saw that he was their Prince, but they hated him and, therefore, they heaped all sorts of insults upon him. They set him in the pillory and pelted him with filth and finally put him in prison. Now there was, in that country, one loyal subject. And when he saw the Prince, he knew him and went and stood by his side. He was close by him when the mob surged around him and they hooted him as well as the Prince. When the Prince was put into prison, they pushed this man in with him to keep him company. And when they put the Prince in the pillory, this man also stood there, putting his own face, whenever he could, in front of the Prince’s face, so as to catch the filth that was thrown at him. When a stain came upon the royal visage, he wiped it off with his handkerchief, and stood there in tears, entreating the wicked man to leave their Prince alone—and always interposing himself to receive any filthy garbage or stone that was aimed at the Prince.

Years went by and the Prince came to his throne, his enemies having been trod underfoot. He alone reigned supreme and his courtiers thronged around him. You know that Prince and who His courtiers are—angels, cherubim, and seraphim! And the Prince, looking among the throng, cried out, “Make way, angels! Clear the road, cherubim! Stand back, seraphim! Bring here the man who was My companion in the prison and in the pillory. Come here, My Friend,” said He and He set him upon His own throne and honored him that day in the sight of the whole universe! Brother, is that man, you? I charge you to let it be so, for the day shall come when you will be rewarded ten thousand times over for any little jests, and jeers, and sarcasms, and lies that men may have poured upon you because you were loyal to Christ! As for me, this is my declaration to my Lord and Savior—

“If on my face for Your dear name,

*Shame and reproaches be,
All hail reproach, and welcome shame,
If You remember me!"*

Perhaps I am addressing some *whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, but who have no knowledge of that blessed fact*. They are strangers to themselves and strangers to God, yet in His eternal purpose He has ordained that they shall be saved. It is possible that this very hour is to be the time in which they shall be brought out of Nature's darkness into God's marvelous light! Let me ask them—have you not lived long enough in sin? Will not the time past suffice you to have worked the will of the flesh? What profit have you had in all your sinning? And you self-righteous people who have tried to save yourselves, how much nearer to God are you now than when you began that task which you will never finish? Have you not put your money into a bag that is full of holes? “Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfies not?” Surely you have lived long enough at enmity against God and you have had time enough to prove whether this world is true or false—and whether her joys are real or delusive! How far has your experience in this matter gone and, as far as it has gone, what has been the result? Will you not trust the Lord Jesus Christ?

If you can do nothing else, come and wash His feet with the tears of your repentance! If you can do nothing else, come and lean on His bosom! If you cannot give Him anything else, give Him yourself! Give Him your whole heart, or give Him your broken heart. After all, Sinner, you are the man who can really honor Christ. I do not read that our Lord Jesus ever said to one of His *disciples*, “Give me to drink.” But He did say that to the woman at the well who had had five husbands, and the man with whom she was then living was not her husband! Jesus did say to her, “Give me to drink,” for a sinner is capable of satisfying the innermost thirst of Christ when that sinner comes and believes in Christ! Oh, that some of you might do that this very moment! That would be the best result of this service. I pray the Lord that it may be so and then, Father, Son, and Spirit—the one true God—we, who believe in Jesus, will love You forever and ever! Amen.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

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