

# SCRIPTURE STUDIES

VOL. XIII, No. 3

APRIL

2006

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord..." Isaiah 1:18

## Old Testament Study:

**Exodus 15:3-21**..... 3

*Israel's Song, pt. 2*

## A Classic Study:

**The Danger of Prosperity, pt. 10, by William Bates**..... 8

## New Testament Study:

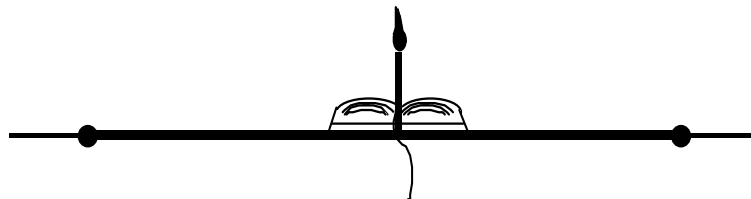
**Matthew 23:25-39**.....13

*"Woe to You" - pt. 2*

## A Topical Study:

**On Prayer, pt. 17** .....16

*Some Questions Answered About Prayer, pt. 2, by Richard Baxter*



*Scripture Studies* (ISSN: 1520-4308) is edited by Scott Sperling and published ten times a year by Scripture Studies, Inc., a non-profit organization. It is distributed all over the world by postal mail and via the internet free of charge. If you would like to financially support the publication and distribution of *Scripture Studies*, send contributions to:

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## Old Testament Study: Exodus 15:3-21

Israel's Song, pt. 2  
by Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

<sup>3</sup>“The LORD is a man of war:  
the LORD is His name.  
<sup>4</sup>Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath  
He cast into the sea:  
His chosen captains also  
are drowned in the Red sea.  
<sup>5</sup>The depths have covered them:  
they sank into the bottom as a stone.  
<sup>6</sup>Thy right hand, O LORD,  
is become glorious in power:  
Thy right hand, O LORD,  
hath dashed in pieces the enemy.  
<sup>7</sup>And in the greatness of thine excellency  
Thou hast overthrown them  
that rose up against Thee:  
Thou sentest forth Thy wrath,  
which consumed them as stubble.  
<sup>8</sup>And with the blast of Thy nostrils  
the waters were gathered together,  
The floods stood upright as an heap,  
and the depths were congealed  
in the heart of the sea.  
<sup>9</sup>The enemy said, ‘I will pursue,  
I will overtake, I will divide the spoil;  
My lust shall be satisfied upon them;  
I will draw my sword,  
my hand shall destroy them.’  
<sup>10</sup>Thou didst blow with thy wind,

the sea covered them:  
They sank as lead  
in the mighty waters.

<sup>11</sup>Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods?  
Who is like thee, glorious in holiness,  
fearful in praises, doing wonders?

<sup>12</sup>Thou stretchedst out thy right hand,  
the earth swallowed them.

<sup>13</sup>Thou in Thy mercy  
hast led forth the people  
which thou hast redeemed:  
Thou hast guided them  
in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.

<sup>14</sup>The people shall hear, and be afraid:  
sorrow shall take hold  
on the inhabitants of Palestina.

<sup>15</sup>Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed;  
the mighty men of Moab,  
Trembling shall take hold upon them;  
all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.

<sup>16</sup>Fear and dread  
shall fall upon them;  
By the greatness of Thine arm  
they shall be as still as a stone;  
Till Thy people pass over, O LORD,  
till the people pass over,  
which Thou hast purchased.

<sup>17</sup>Thou shalt bring them in,  
and plant them in the mountain  
of Thine inheritance,  
In the place, O LORD,  
which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in,  
In the Sanctuary, O Lord,  
which Thy hands have established.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.”

<sup>19</sup>For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the

children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. <sup>20</sup>And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. <sup>21</sup>And Miriam answered them, "Sing ye to the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." (AV)

"The Lord is a man of war: The Lord is His name" (v. 3). This brings before us an aspect of the Divine character which is very largely ignored today. God is "light" (1 John 1:5) as well as "love"; holy and righteous, as well as longsuffering and merciful. And because He *is* holy, He hates sin; because He *is* righteous, He must punish it. This is something for which the believer should *rejoice*; if he does not, something is wrong with him. It is only the sickly sentimentality of the flesh which shrinks from believing and meditating upon these Divine perfections. Far different was it here with Israel at the Red Sea. They praised God *because* He had dealt in judgment with those who so stoutly defied Him. They looked at things from the Divine viewpoint. They referred to Pharaoh and his hosts as *God's* enemies, not as *theirs*. "In the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up *against Thee*" (v. 7). The same thing is seen in Revelation 18 and 19. Immediately after the destruction of Babylon by the fearful plagues of God, we read, "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, 'Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are His judgments; for He hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.' And again they said, 'Alleluia'" (Revelation 19:1-3).

Far different were the sentiments of Israel here than those which govern most our moderns. When they magnified Jehovah as a Man of War their meaning is clearly expressed in the next words of their song: "Pharaoh's chariots and his hosts hath *He* cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them; they sank into the bottom as a stone" (vs. 4-5). They did not regard this Divine judgment as a reflection upon God's character; instead, they saw in it a display of His perfections. "He hath triumphed gloriously. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power... in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hadst overthrown them" (vv. 6, 7): This was their confession. The "modernists" have not hesitated to criticize Israel severely, yea, to condemn them in unmeasured terms, for their "vindictive glee." Such a conception of the Lord as Israel here expressed was worthy, we are told, of none but the most ferocious of the Barbarians. But that Israel was not here mis-representing God, that they were not giving utterance to their own carnal feelings, is abundantly clear from Revelation 15:3, where we read of saints *in Heaven* singing "The Song of Moses the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb." Certainly there will be no manifestations of the flesh in Heaven!

Strikingly does the Song of Exodus 15 set forth the *perfect ease* with

which the Almighty overthrew His enemies: **“The Enemy said, ‘I will pursue you, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.’ Thou didst *blow* with Thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters”** (vv. 9, 10). The Lord had promised to bring His redeemed into Canaan, the haughty Egyptians thought to resist the purpose of the Most High. With loud boastings of what *they* would do, they followed Israel into the parted waves of the Red Sea. With one breath of His mouth the Lord overthrew the marshaled forces of the enemy, in their mightiest array, as nothing more than a cob-web which stood in the pathway of the onward march of His eternal counsels.

Well might Israel cry, **“Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?”** (v. 11). And well may we ask today, “Who is like Thee, O God of the Holy Scriptures, among the ‘gods’ of Christendom?” How entirely different is *the* Lord — omnipotent, immutable, sovereign, triumphant — from the feeble, changeable, disappointed and defeated “god” which is the object of **“worship”** in thousands of the churches! How few today *glory* in God’s **“holiness”**! How few *praise* Him for His **“fearfulness”**! How few are acquainted with His **“wonders”**!

**“Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed. Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation”** (v. 13). This was *a new standing* — *brought* nigh to God, into His very presence. This is what redemption effects. This is the *position* of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. **“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might *bring us to God*”** (1 Peter 3:18). God’s redeemed are a people whom He has purchased for Himself, to be with Himself forever — **“that where *I am*, there *ye may be also*.”** **“Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.”** “This is our place as His redeemed. That is, we are brought to God according to all that He is. His whole moral nature having been completely satisfied in the death of Christ, He can now rest in us in perfect complacency. The hymn therefore does but express a Scriptural thought which says — ‘So near, so very near to God, I nearer cannot be, For in the person of His Son, I am as near as He.’ The place indeed is accorded to us in grace, but none-the-less in righteousness; so that not only are all the attributes of God’s character concerned in bringing us there, but He Himself is also glorified by it. It is an immense thought, and one which, when held in power, imparts both strength and energy to our souls — that we are even now *brought to God*. The whole distance — measured by the death of Christ on the cross, when He was made sin for us — has been bridged over, and *our* position of nearness is marked by the place *He* now occupies as glorified by the right hand of God. In Heaven itself we shall not be nearer, as to our position, because it is *in Christ*. It will not be forgotten that our *enjoyment* of this truth, indeed our apprehension of it, will depend upon our *present* condition. God looks for a state corresponding with our standing, i.e., our responsibility is measured by our privilege. But until we know our place there cannot be an answering condition. We must first learn that we are brought to God if we would in any

measure walk in accordance with the position. State and walk must ever flow from a *known relationship*. Unless therefore we are taught the truth of our standing before God, we shall never answer to it in our souls, or in our walk and conversation” (Ed. Dennett).

**“The people shall hear, and be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestine. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established”** (vv. 14-17). What firm confidence do these words breathe! What God had wrought at the Red Sea was the guarantee to Israel that He who had begun a work for them, would finish it. They were not counting on their own strength — **“By the greatness of *Thine* arm they”** (their enemies) **“shall be as still as a stone.”** Their trust was solely in the *Lord* — **“Thou shalt bring them in,”** blessed illustration of the first outflowings of simple but confident faith! Alas, that this early simplicity is usually so quickly lost. Alas, that so often it is displaced by the workings of an evil heart of unbelief. Oh, that we might ever *reason* as did Israel here, and as the apostle Paul — **“Who delivered us from so great a death, and *doth* deliver; in whom we trust that He *will yet* deliver”** (2 Corinthians 1:10).

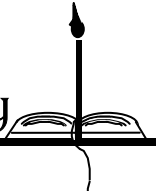
**“Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone”** (v. 16). Opposition there would be, enemies to be encountered. But utterly futile would be their puny efforts. Impossible for them to resist success fully the execution of God’s eternal counsels. Equally impossible is it for *our* enemies, be they human or demoniac, to keep us out of the promised inheritance. **“Who shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?”** Who, indeed! **“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us”** (Romans 8:38, 39). Thus the end is sure from the beginning, and we may, like Israel, sing the Song of Victory *before* the first step is taken. in the wilderness pathway!

Israel’s confidence was not misplaced. A number of examples are furnished in later Scriptures of how tidings of Jehovah’s judgments on Israel’s behalf became known far and wide, and were used by him to humble and alarm. Jethro, the Midianite, comes to Moses and says, **“Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh... now I *know* that the Lord is greater**

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**than all gods”** (Exodus 18:10, 11). Rahab of Jericho declared to the two spies, **“I know that the Lord hath given you the land and that *your* terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint**

# A Classic Study: The Danger of Prosperity



## A Classic Study by William Bates (1635–1699)

[Here we continue a study by the eminent English Puritan William Bates, concerning the danger of prosperity.]—*Ed.*

### The Danger of Prosperity, pt. 10

**The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. (Prov. 1:32, AV).**

It now follows that by application we should make this great doctrine more useful to ourselves.

In the general, it is of excellent use to rectify our judgments about the things and men of the world. The most are miserably deluded, and live in a blindness so gross and misleading, that they feel secure when near steep ruin. Asclepius being blind, mournfully complained, that he was said to be led by a child: but carnal men are voluntarily guided by sense and fancy, the false lights that rule in children, and blindly follow, without considering who is their leader, and whither they are led. Or they are like one in a slumber, who is strongly affected with slight things: a scene of fancy in a dream transports him as a glorious reality; a prick of a pin makes him start as fearfully as if a viper bit him. Thus carnal men are as deeply affected with temporal good and evil things, as if they were eternal, wherein their blessedness or misery consists. And there is nothing of greater use and defense to the soul, than to make a true judgment of things that greatly and nearly concern us. From thence proceeds a wise choice, a well-ordered conversation, and upon it our blessed end depends. For as the rudder is to a ship, the will is to man; if it be duly turned it conducts him safely to felicity.

The particular just inferences from the doctrine are:

1. Temporal prosperity is not a certain sign of God's special favor. There are some benefits dispersed by a general providence to all, like the common benefits of a prince to all within his dominions, and then there are some are like special gifts to his favorites. Of the first kind are riches and honors, and whatever is the support or comfort of the present life. Of the second are spiritual and heavenly blessings, the graces and comforts of the Holy Spirit of God, the infallible seal of His love to us. The Psalmist prays, "**Remember me, O Lord, with the favor you bear unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation**" (Psalm 106:4). There is a favor common to all men as His creatures, and the fruits of it are promiscuous to the evil and the good: but the favor from whence proceeds grace and glory,



is the privilege of His chosen.

2. The temporal prosperity of the wicked is consistent with God's hatred. When men turn His blessings into the fuel of their lusts, and His patience into an advantage of sinning more securely, how flourishing soever they are in the world, He looks on them with an avenging eye. He hates all the workers of iniquity. His seeming connivance is no argument that He is not highly provoked by their sins, or that they may obtain an easy pardon. Yet this is the inward principle of the gross and outward sins in the lives of men, though unobserved by them. As the vital heat is not felt in the heart, it is the cause of all the heat that is felt in the outward parts of the body. "**These things hast thou done**", (says God to the rebellious sinner) "**and I kept silence**", that is, suspended the terrible effects of justice, "**you thought I was altogether such a one as thyself**" (Psalm 50:21). Astonishing blindness! Not to discern the apparent antipathy of such connections. As if God's forbearance of the guilty were forgiveness: and rebellion against His commands, and the love of sin which is enmity to Him, were consistent with the fruition of His favor. But we have the most clear and convincing assurance, that God cannot be pleased with men, without their being made like Him in righteousness and true holiness. He sees and hates sin, and abhors the sinners though for a time they are spared. Justice and patience are His attributes: "**He is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not acquit the guilty. He endures with much patience the vessels of wrath, till they are fitted for destruction**" (Nahum 1:3). The presumptuous sinner that is encouraged and hardened (as if sin were not so hateful to God), because he enjoys the world in abundance, and expects as easy remission at last, fearfully deceives his soul: He sows the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind (see Hosea 8:7)

3. The prosperity of the wicked is so far from being a sign of God's love, that it often proceeds from His deepest displeasure. It is a curse candied over with a little vanishing sweetness, but deadly in the operation. It makes people careless of God and their souls of heaven and eternity, and they become irrecoverable in their lost state. Prosperity induces false security, that presages and accelerates their ruin. It is expressed as the most fearful and sorest judgment by the prophet, "**The Lord has poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep**" (Isaiah 29:10), an insensibleness of the worst evils, their sins, and the infinite danger that attends them. This judgment is usually inflicted from the righteous God by the prosperity of the wicked, and extremely provokes Him, it being a sin of the greatest guilt, as well as a punishment of former high provocations. It is a distinguishing judgment inflicted upon His enemies, from which His children are exempted. Other judgments that cause grief and trouble to sinners, often incline His compassions to them; but this judgment inflames His wrath. In short, the prosperity of the wicked here, is a fatal sign they are reserved for the severity of justice, for their abuse of the riches of His mercy: and of all judgments that is more terrible, that insensibly destroys, and certainly brings damnation.

4. From hence we are instructed to look upon prosperous sinners with

pity; not with envy and indignation. They please themselves, and triumph in their conceited happiness, as the psalmist expressed it, **“While he live, he blessed his soul”** (Ps. 49:18). But how contrary is the opinion of vain men to the judgment of Christ. He pronounced (and upon His sentence depends eternity), **“Woe unto you that are rich, for you have received your consolation! Woe unto you that are full, for you shall hunger; Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep”** (Luke 6:24ff). And we are told by the inspired prophet, **“Man that is in honor, and understands not”** (that does not consider the vanity and frail tenure of his present flourishing state; nor his duty and interest to employ his riches, power, and greatness, for securing his everlasting felicity) **“is like the beasts that perish”** (Ps. 49:21), that is, stupid and insensible of approaching ruin, like the beast that was to be sacrificed, and did not perceive that the gilding its horns, and adorning it with garlands, was a sign it was destined to death. They now live in ease and pleasures; but they must shortly remove from their rich possessions, and splendid palaces, to the dark regions of woe, and death will be an entrance into endless sorrows. **“The laughter of fools is like the crackling of thorns under the pot”** (Eccl. 7:6), a short blaze soon damped and extinguished.

It is a dreadful imprecation of the holy psalmist: **“Let their way be dark and slippery; and let the angel of the Lord persecute them”** (Ps. 35:6). To fly in the dark and in slippery places, and so to fall into the mire and pits, is a fit emblem of their condition, who are prosperous and wicked. They are hoodwinked by prosperity, in a voluntary darkness, and see not the precipices that surround them. And how slippery is their way by so numerous and insinuating temptations! How easily, how frequently and dangerously do they fall, and both defile and wound themselves! Briefly, they are truly miserable here, even while they most pleasantly and contentedly enjoy the world. They are accumulating the treasures of wrath, and preparing new torments for their souls. They stand upon brittle ice, and hell is beneath ready to swallow them up in its deepest gulf. As it is said by the apostle, concerning the saints deadened by sorrows here, that their glorious life is hid in God, and shall illustriously appear with Christ at His second coming (see Col. 3:3ff). So the terrible death of the wicked, while they flourish here, is hid from the eyes of sense, but shall be revealed in the day of wrath. And to a wise observer, to a serious believer, the prosperous sinner is the most unhappy and compassionate object in the world; for he perishes by such a flattering kind of death that he is neither apprehensive, nor affected with his danger.

And when an illuminate Christian sees the marks of damnation in sinners, whom prosperity deceives and hardens, he cannot but be tenderly moved, and is obliged most earnestly to pray to the merciful Father of Spirits, whose grace is omnipotent, that He would recover their lapsed souls, bleeding to eternal death. If there be any heavenly charity in our breasts, it will melt our hearts, and dissolve us in tears to prevent, or at least to solemnize and lament their heavy destiny.

5. From hence we are instructed to judge truly and wisely of afflictions: they are the necessary and merciful dispensations of heaven, to recover sinners corrupted by prosperity, and to return them to God. Sense,

though its principal end is to preserve the body, is not always a fit judge of things beneficial to it; the appetites and aversions are sometimes pernicious: One in a dropsy drinks to quench his thirst and increases his distemper. A bitter potion is rejected by a sick child, not considering that a medicine, not sweet meats, can cure his disease. The pleasure of the taste, is no certain indication of what is wholesome for health: Much more incapable is sense to judge of what is useful for the soul. Reason is entirely renounced, and fallacious sense is on the throne, when prosperity with its gaudy allurements is esteemed as our happiness, and adversity is abhorred as the worst misery. The wise man instructed by dear experience tells us, **“It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; For that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: For by the sadness of countenance, the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth”** (Ecclesiastes 7:2-4). Prosperity irritates and fortifies the sensual vile affections, the pleasing of which is fatal to the soul. As it is observed by the natural historian, that the sparkling color and delicious relish of wine, tempts men to drinking without thirst, and from intemperance, innumerable diseases flow.

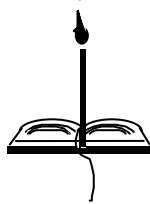
Prosperity diverts the mind from considering the things that belong to our eternal peace, and the will from consenting to them. The thoughts are so scattered abroad, that few are left at home, duly to ponder the miserable effects of sin. Not in this the rules of natural and spiritual medicine agree, that one extreme is to be cured by another. The devil cruelly destroys the souls of men by the pleasures of sin; and God, the wise and compassionate Physician, recovers them by bitter sorrows, the most congruous and powerful means for that blessed effect.

Affliction makes us retire within our hearts, and shuts out the noisy throng of worldly distracting objects; and then truth and conscience, that were under unrighteous restraints, will break the fetters, and speak loudly and terribly to the sinner. Affliction fixes the mind on those objects, that duly considered, are able to terrify the most determined and resolved sinner. There is no man so prodigiously bad, so perfectly a brute, but has at times some twinges of conscience, some workings in his Spirit, some desires of salvation. Even Balaam, who in the judgment of the angel was more stupid than the donkey he rode on, yet had some springing in his heart towards heaven: **“O that I might die the death of righteous, and my last end may be like his”** (Numb. 23:10): But these are fleeting and variable, and so weak in comparison of the opposite desires of the flesh, that while prosperity continues, they prove abortive. Now, affliction deadens the flaming edge of the affection to vanity. When the sinner feels the truth of the divine threatening, then he is effectually convinced of the evil of sin, and understands, by beginning of sorrows here, what the issues will be hereafter, and retracts his foolish choice. In the time of affliction, our sins find us out; and it is more likely we shall then find our sins out, and with repenting tears acknowledge them, and with hatred renounce them.

Now the consideration of the designed benefit by afflictions, should

reconcile them to our wills, and persuade us, with patience and thankfulness, to accept of them as the testimonies of God's peculiar favor. Our Savior declares, "**As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous and repent**" (Rev. 3:19). God is often most angry, when a man make no sensible discovery that He is so. Thus He threatens the rebellious Jews, "**I will make my fury towards you to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from three, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry**" (Ezekiel 16:42), implying a final divorce, leaving them to their impure idolatries, without more correction. If there be such a hardness of heart as the fire cannot melt, such a rush that the fire cannot purify, God will not waste His judgments on such desperate sinners. He withdraws His chastising hand, as hopeless of their amendment, and that desertion is a fatal signature of reprobation. And on the contrary, many times God's love is most tender and compassionate to us, when to sense there is the least evidence of it. Even the heathens in the twilight, between the darkness of idolatry, and the light of nature, discovered that afflictions were the privilege of those that are regularly beloved of God. And Christians have a more sure word for their instruction, "**Whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives**" (Heb 12:6). There is not a stronger evidence of His fatherly wise love, than the discipline of the rod; and the afflicted returning sinner may, with an adoptive assurance come to the throne of grace. By afflictions, the world is less enticing and hurtful to us, and heaven is more amiable and desirable: The things that are seen, are vilified and distasteful; and invisible things are sought with our highest esteem and respect, and zealous endeavors. Those lusts that spring and grow, and flourish in prosperity, are blasted and wither, and die in adversity. Those who forget God when prosperous in the world, are taught by the voice of the rod to adore His majesty, obey His laws, imitate His holiness, and humbly to accept of His mercy. By afflictions the sensual appetites are subdued and brought into order; a low state, is a protection from many strong and destructive temptations. Sickness that brings near the grace, and makes us feel how frail we are, renders the world despicable, that by their lusts so powerfully infatuates men to their ruin. Sanctified affliction, is a happy preparative for the fullness of joy in the blessed presence of God. The first to whom our savior promised the rest and joy of paradise, was the companion of His cross.

Let us therefore, with free judgments, and sincere affections, make an estimate of all sensible things, not judge ourselves to be in the favor of God by the good things received here, nor under His wrath by evil: Let us not be surprised at the prosperity of the wicked, nor shaken at the afflictions of the godly, but regulate our thoughts by the unerring wisdom of God, so clearly revealed in His word. He is propitious, when He denies or takes from us those temporal enjoyments that we are apt to abuse; and severe when He bestows them, and seems to indulge men's carnal affections. It is but a little while, and the pleasures of sinners, and the afflictions of the saints, will end in a state directly contrary to what is enjoyed or suffered here. With God a thousand years are but as one day. The world is not of a weeks standing in the divine account: He measures all things by eternity. The vessels of mercy are by sanctified afflictions made fit for eternal glory. The vessels of wrath are by the abuse of His bounty



## New Testament Study:

### “Woe to You” - pt. 2

<sup>25</sup>“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup>Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

<sup>27</sup>“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. <sup>28</sup>In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

<sup>29</sup>“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. <sup>30</sup>And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ <sup>31</sup>So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup>Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!

<sup>33</sup>“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? <sup>34</sup>Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. <sup>35</sup>And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. <sup>36</sup>I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.

<sup>37</sup>“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. <sup>38</sup>Look, your house is left to you desolate. <sup>39</sup>For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Jesus continues pronouncing woes upon the religious leaders of the time: **“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness”** (vss. 25–28). Jesus here speaks of the importance of purity of heart, over the outside show of purity. The religious leaders made a show of purity, but inside were **“full of greed and self-indulgence”** and **“full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”** God, of course, sees the heart, and that’s what counts for Him. In any case, a corrupt heart will, sooner or later, be manifest in one’s outside actions. As Jesus taught: **“Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks”** (Matt. 12:34). And likewise, a pure heart most naturally leads to pure actions. “If due care be taken in *first* cleaning the inside, the outside will be clean also” [Henry].

The next woe: **“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets”** (vss. 29–31). Here Jesus points out a specific instance of the religious leaders’ hypocrisy. They feigned honor for the martyred prophets of the past, claiming that they **“would not have taken part... in shedding the blood of the prophets”**, and yet, that very week (even that very day), they were scheming to have Jesus arrested (see Matt. 21:46). “They pretended a deal of kindness for the memory of the prophets that were dead and gone, while they hated and persecuted those that were present with them” [Henry]. “While piously claiming to be different, they were already plotting ways to put an end to Jesus” [Carson, 483]. “They were boasting of superiority to their fathers who killed prophets, and yet they were showing by both actions and attitudes that they were lineal descendants of these same murderers” [Thomas, 340]. This was how they were **“testifying against themselves.”**

Now, they revered the dead prophets, not for any respect for the teachings of the prophets, but because their constituents revered the prophets, and also because dead prophets cannot admonish them for their behavior. “Carnal people can easily honor the memories of faithful ministers that are dead and gone, because they do not reprove them, nor disturb them, in their sins” [Henry]. “This is the way of hypocrites to honor God’s holy ministers and true-living teachers after they have died, but in their lives to abhor them. This results partly from envy, and partly because dead men’s ashes can no longer give trouble with hard and austere reproof” [Calvin, III-61]. “Ask in Mose’s times who were the good people: they will be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but not Moses—he should be stoned. Ask in Samuel’s times who were the good people: they will be Moses and Joshua, but not Samuel. Ask in the times of Christ who were such: they will be all the former prophets, with Samuel, but not Christ

and His apostles” [Berlenberger, in Ryle, 304].

Jesus speaks of how the Pharisees and teachers of the Law would imitate the behavior of their forefathers who persecuted and killed the prophets: **“Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers! You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town”** (vss. 32–34). As if in order to prove His estimation of their character, Jesus was to **“send them prophets and wise men and teachers.”** Those **“prophets and wise men and teachers”** would be the early Christian leaders, whom the religious leaders would **“flog”**, **“pursue from town to town”**, and even **“kill and crucify.”** In this way, they would **“fill up the measure of the sin of their forefathers”** and be rendered inexcusable before God.

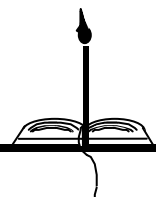
By the way, note that Jesus said, **“I am sending you prophets...”** This is an explicit claim by Jesus to be God. It is He who will guide and direct these prophets of God.

Jesus continues by telling them of the judgment that will befall them: **“And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation”** (vss. 35–36). Severe judgment would come upon them, and those in Jerusalem whom they lead, for killing the Christian **“prophets and wise men and teachers”**, and especially, for killing their Messiah. This judgment did come upon Jerusalem, as foretold, in the year 70 AD, when the Romans utterly destroyed the city. The Jewish historian Josephus (who was born in 37 AD) wrote of the destruction of Jerusalem: **“When they went in numbers into the lanes of the city, with their swords drawn, they slew whom they overtook, without mercy, and set fire to the houses wither the Jews were fled, and burnt every soul in them, and laid waste a great many of the rest... They ran every one through whom they met with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men’s blood”** [*Wars*, 6.8.5].

Though this destruction would be brought upon themselves, nevertheless, Jesus laments over it: **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’”** (vss. 37–39). Here we have a glimpse of the heart of God, poured out in verbal terms, full of emotion. The Lord has shown nothing but love for Jerusalem, expressed in His desire to **“gather”** His people to Him, yet they had responded by **“killing the prophets and stoning those sent to them.”** Perhaps the saddest words in the Bible are found here: **“...but you were not willing.”** The sentiment expressed in those words is the root cause of interminable human suffering, in this life and in the afterlife. Because we

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## A Topical Study: On Prayer



*[As we continue our series on prayer, here we continue a study in which Richard Baxter answers questions about prayer.]*

### Some Questions About Prayer Answered, pt. 2 by Richard Baxter (1615-1691)

*Question 8.* Must we pray always when the Spirit moves us, and only then, or as reason guides us?

*Answer.* There are two sorts of the Spirit's motions. One is by extraordinary inspiration or impulse, as He moved the prophets and apostles, to reveal new laws, or precepts, or events, or to do some actions without respect to any other command than the inspiration itself. This Christians are not now to expect, because experience tells us that it is ceased; or if any should pretend to it as not yet ceased, in the prediction of events, and direction in some things otherwise indifferent, yet it is most certain that it is ceased as to legislation; for the Spirit itself has already given us those laws, which He hath declared to be perfect, and unchangeable till the end of the world. The other sort of the Spirit's working, is not to make new laws or duties, but to guide and quicken us in the doing of that which is our duty before by the laws already made. And these are the motions that all true Christians must now expect. By which you may see, that the Spirit and reason are not to be here disjoined, much less opposed. As reason suffices not without the Spirit, being dark and asleep; so the Spirit works not on the will but by the reason. He moves not a man as a beast or stone, to do a thing he knows not why; but by illumination gives him the soundest reason for the doing of it: and duty is first duty before we do it; and when by our own sin we forfeit the special motions or help of the Spirit, duty does not thereby cease to be duty, nor our omission to be sin. If the Spirit of God teach you to discern the best season for prayer, by considering your affairs, and when you are most free, this is not to be denied to be the work of the Spirit, because it is rational (as fanatic enthusiasts imagine). And if you are moved to pray in a crowd of business, or at any time when reason can prove that it is not your duty but your sin, the same reason proves that it was not the Spirit of God that moved you to it: for the Spirit in the heart is not contrary to the Spirit in the Scripture. Set upon the duty which the Spirit in the Scripture commands you, and then you may be sure that you obey the Spirit; otherwise you disobey it. Yea, if your hearts be cold, prayer is a likelier means to warm them, than the omission of it. To ask



whether you may pray while your hearts are cold and backward, is as to ask whether you may labor or come to the fire before you are warm. God's Spirit is likelier to help you in duty, than in the neglect of it.

*Question 9.* May a man pray that hath no desire at all of the grace which he prays for?

*Answer.* No; because it is no prayer, but dissembling; and dissembling is no duty. He that asks for that which he would not have, does lie to God in his hypocrisy. But if a man have but cold and common desires (though they reach not to that which will prove them evidences of true grace), he may pray and express those desires which he hath.

*Question 10.* May a man pray that doubts of his interest in God, and dare not call Him Father as His child?

*Answer.* 1. There is a common interest in God, which all mankind have, as He is good to all: and as His mercy through Christ is offered to all; and thus those that are not regenerate are His children by creation, and by participation of His mercy; and they may both call Him Father and pray to Him, though yet they are unregenerate. 2. God hath an interest in you, when you have no special interest in Him: therefore His command must be obeyed which bids you pray. 3. Groundless doubts will not disoblige you from your duty; else men might free themselves from almost all their obedience.

*Question 11.* May a wicked or unregenerate man pray, and is he accepted? Or is not his prayer abominable to God?

*Answer.* 1. A wicked man as a wicked man, can pray no how but wickedly, that is, he asks only for things unlawful to be asked, or for lawful things to unlawful ends; and this is still abominable to God. 2. A wicked man may have in him some good that proceeds from common grace; and this he may be obliged to exercise, and so by prayer to express his desires so far as they are good. 3. A wicked man's wicked prayers are never accepted, but a wicked man's prayers which are for good things, from common grace, are so far accepted as that they are some means conducing to his reformation; and though his person be still unjustified, and these prayers sinful, yet the total omission of them is a greater sin. 4. A wicked man is bound at once to repent and pray (see Acts 8:22; Isa. 55:6,7). And whenever God bids him ask for grace, he bids him desire grace; and to bid him pray, is to bid him repent and be of a better mind. Therefore those that reprove ministers for persuading wicked men to pray, reprove them for persuading them to repentance and good desires. But if they pray without that repentance which God and man exhort them to, the sin is theirs: but all their labor is not lost if their desires fall short of saving sincerity; they are under obligations to many duties, which tend to bring them nearer Christ, and which they may do without special, saving grace.

*Question 12.* May a wicked man pray the Lord's prayer, or be exhorted to use it?

*Answer.* The Lord's prayer in its full and proper sense, must be spo-

ken by a penitent, believing, justified person; for in the full sense no one else can call Him our Father (though in a limited sense the wicked may): and they cannot desire the glory of God, and the coming of His kingdom, nor the doing of His will on earth as it is in heaven, and this sincerely, without true grace (especially those enemies of holiness, that think it too much strictness to do God's will on earth, ten thousand degrees lower than it is done in heaven). Nor can they put up one petition of that prayer sincerely according to the proper sense; no, not to pray for their daily bread, as a means of their support while they are doing the will of God, and seeking first His glory and His kingdom. But yet it is possible for them to speak these words from such common desires as are not so bad as none at all.

*Question 13.* Is it idolatry to pray to saints or angels? Or is it always sinful?

*Answer.* I love not to be too quarrelsome with other men's devotions; but, 1. I see not how praying to an angel or a departed saint can be excused from sin. Because it supposes them to be everywhere present, or to be omniscient, and to know the heart, yea, to know at once the hearts of all men; or else the speaker pretends to know then the saint or angel is present and hears him, and when not: and because the Scripture does nowhere signify that God would have us pray to any such saints or angels; but signifies enough to satisfy us of the contrary. 2. But all prayer to them is not idolatry, but some is, and therefore we must distinguish, if we will judge righteously. (1.) To pray to saints or angels as supposed omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent, is flat idolatry. (2.) To pray to them to forgive us our sins against God, or to justify, or sanctify, or redeem, or save us from hell, or anything which belongs to God only to do, is no better than idolatry. (3.) But to pray to them only to do that which belongs to the guardian, or charitable office that is committed to them, and to think that though they are not omnipresent nor omniscient, nor you know not whether they hear you at this time or not, yet you will venture your prayers at uncertainty, it being but so much labor lost; this I take to be sinfully superstitious, but not idolatry (see Rev. 22:8,9; Col 2:18).

*Question 14.* Is a man bound to pray ordinarily in his family?

*Answer.* I have answered this affirmatively before, and proved it; one grain of grace would answer it better than arguments can do.

*Question 15.* Must the same man pray secretly that hath prayed in his family or with others?

*Answer.* 1. Distinguish between those that were the speakers, and those that were not; and 2. Between those that have leisure from greater or more urgent duties, and those that have not. And so, (1.) Those that are free from the urgency of all other duties, which at that time are greater, should pray both in the family and in secret; especially if they were not themselves the speakers, usually they will have the more need of secret prayer; because their hearts in public may more easily flag, and much of their case may be omitted. (2.) But those that have more urgent,

greater duties, may take up at that time with family prayer alone; having there put up the same requests as they would do in secret.

*Question 16.* Is it best to keep set hours for prayer, or to take the time which is fittest at present?

*Answer.* Ordinarily set times will prove the fittest times; and to leave the time undetermined and uncertain, will put all out of order, and multiply impediments, and hinder duty. But yet when extraordinary cases make the ordinary time unfit, a fitter time must be taken.

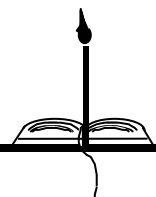
*Question 17.* Is it lawful to join in family (or church) prayers with ungodly men?

*Answer.* I join both together, because the cases little differ; for the pastor hath the government of the people in church worship, as the master of the family has in family worship. You may choose at first whether you will be a member of the church or family (if you were not born to it as your privilege); but when you are a member of either, you must be governed as members. And to the case, 1. You must distinguish between professed wicked men, and those that sin against their profession. 2. And between a family (or church) that is totally wicked and that which is mixed of good and bad. 3. And between those wicked men whose presence is your sin, because you have power to remove them, and those whose presence is not your sin, nor the matter in your power. 4. And between one that may yet choose of what family he will be, and one that may not. And so I answer, (1.) If it be the fault of the master of the family (or the pastors of the church) that such wicked men are there, and not cast out, then it is their sin to join with them, because it is their duty to remove them; but that is not the case of the fellow-servants, (or people), that have no power. (2.) If that wicked men profess their wickedness, after sufficient admonition, you must professedly disown communion with them; and then you are morally separated and discharged, when you have no power locally to separate. (3.) It is your sin to fly from your duty, because a wicked man is there, whom you have no power to remove. (4.) There are many prayers that a wicked man is bound to put up to God; and you must not omit your duty, because he performs his, though faultily; methinks you should have more scruples joining or conversing with one that forsakes prayer (which is the greater sin) than with one that prays. (5.) But if you are free to choose, you are to be blamed if you will not choose a better family (or church) (other things being equal): especially if all the company be wicked.

*Question 18.* But what if the master of a family (or pastor) be a heretic or ungodly?

*Answer.* You must distinguish between his personal faults, and the faults of his performance or worship. His personal faults (such as swearing or drunkenness, etc.) you must disown, and must not choose a master (or

## A Study in Wisdom: Job 1:3-5 (pt. 1)



*[Here we continue a reprint of a small portion of Joseph Caryl's study in Job. Mr. Caryl wrote twelve volumes on the book of Job. His study is a great example of how deep one can dig into the truths of the Bible.]*

### Job 1:3-5 – Job's Possessions, by Joseph Caryl

<sup>3</sup>His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred oxen, and five hundred donkeys, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all men in the East. <sup>4</sup>And his sons went and feasted in their homes, everyone his day, and sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and drink with them. <sup>5</sup>And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings, according to the number of them all.

The Holy Ghost having showed us the qualities of Job's person, in the first verse, the olive plants round about his table (being the first outward blessing) in the second verse, now proceeds to show also his outward estate; his stock of cattle, "**His substance was seven thousand sheep.**" Concerning the outward estate of Job, we may note in this third verse,

1. The several kinds of his stock: Sheep, Camels, Oxen, and Donkeys.
2. The several numbers of each of these kinds.

It is said, "**His substance is seven thousand sheep.**" We in our language, call the estate of a man his substance, and a rich man we call him a substantial man, though indeed riches are but external and accidental, yet they are called the substance of a man, because they make him subsist and stand by himself, he needs not the prop and help of others. The word here in the Hebrew which we translate substance is indifferent to signify any possession; but especially it signifies possession of substance by cattle. Therefore in those times wherein the estates of the great men of the earth were most in cattle, this expression was chiefly used; the Septuagint renders it, "and his cattle were 7000 sheep". So then his substance of cattle was seven thousand sheep.

Sheep for meat and sheep for clothing, the flesh and the fleece both are of great use.

Camels were used in those countries for burdens, and for travel especially in long journeys, merchants traveled with camels. As you may read, Joseph's brethren beheld a company of Ishmaelites which came from Gilead with their camels, and these were very strong for travel, being able to abide much hunger and thirst (as the natural history affirms). Some affirm they will travel six days together in those hot countries without drink, and therefore those eastern parts are stocked and stored with camels, beasts so fit for service there.

Oxen were used for the tillage of the ground. The donkeys were for ordinary travel, and for ordinary burdens about the house.

But you may say, we read in the inventory which here is made of Job's estate, that he had sheep and camels, oxen and donkeys, but where was the silver and the gold, where was the goodly household stuffs, the jewels and the plate? Here is no mention made of these.

I answer, first, that without doubt Job had silver and gold, and precious things. It is clear that he had when he said **"If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold you are my confidence..."** (Job 31:24). It had not been proper for him to deny that gold was his hope (in this sense) if he had not had gold in his possession; or to say he did not confide in fine gold, when he had no gold to confide in. So then he had gold and silver. And for jewels, the holy story tells us **"That God gave Job twice as much as he had before"** (Job 42:12). And a part of what was restored to him, was jewels and earrings: **"Every man gave him a piece of money, and everyone an earring of gold"** (Job 42:11). Therefore he had jewels also in his possession at first, or else they could not be doubled to him in the day of his deliverance.

We find frequent mention in those ancient times, of the riches of the patriarchs and others in gold and silver. It is expressed concerning Abraham, **"That Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold"** (Gen 13:2). And Abraham's servant said of him, **"The Lord has blessed my Master greatly, and he has given him flocks, and herds, and silver and gold"** (Gen 24:35); **"The servant brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and gave them to Rebecca, he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things"** (Gen 24:53). And Genesis 23:16, we read of Abraham's paying four hundred shekels of silver unto Ephron the Hittite, which was called current money with the merchants. So that it is plain in those days, gold and silver, and jewels were substance.

But here the estate of Job is reckoned and cast up by cattle. There is no mention of gold, and silver, and jewels, and precious stones, and the like. His substance was 7000 sheep, etc. Two reasons may be given for this account.

The first is this, Because those ancient times were so much given to and employed in the feeding of cattle: therefore they did reckon their estates by cattle, as we now do by money, by gold and by silver, or by yearly rents and revenues: If a man had so many cattle, so many sheep, so many oxen, etc, they knew his estate, what gold and silver or other riches he might have. When the sons of Jacob came before Pharaoh, they are called shepherds, **“The men are shepherds, for their trade has been to feed cattle”** (Gen. 46:32): They are men of cattle, as if he should say, the special commodity, the main thing these trade in, is about cattle, and that gives the denomination: They had gold and silver, but they are men of cattle.

And then again, for this reason, cattle are living substance; gold and silver are dead substance. Cattle in their own nature are more excellent than gold and silver, because they have life. Everything that has life is better in its degree than that which has no life. The lowest creature that has life is better than the best without life; the lowest of a superior order, is better than the highest of an inferior. Now all things without life are put into a degree, into a class or form below and inferior to those that have life. It is true, that money answers all things, money is equivalently sheep, oxen, donkeys, camels, bread, meat, drink, clothing, and whatsoever you need, it is virtually all that you may and can receive; so that by way of commutation and exchange money all things: but formally and in itself, so these things are the life and sustenance, and support of man, therefore these go away with the name and the title of the estate. The estate or substance of it was in these natural and living riches, not in artificial or dead riches. Hence, it was that the Ancients gave the name *Pecune* to money, which comes a *pecude*, from cattle (so the critics observe) because they stamped the form of a sheep or an ox upon money, noting that cattle were the riches and the estate of a man properly and chiefly. This may suffice for the reason why the estate or riches of Job is set forth by cattle, and not by gold and silver and other like possessions.

Further, with this abundance of cattle that Job had, we must understand (though it is not expressed) that he had land suitable to such a stock.

And when these numbers are set down (because we usually say, he is but poor that can number his cattle), we are not to stand strictly upon the precise number of seven thousand, or five hundred, etc. But here are great quantities mentioned, to note that Job had many, very many cattle, and that he had great numbers of all these.

Then it follows: He had these and **“a very great household”**

The words in the original, signify servants, or tillage and husbandry. Concerning Isaac, in Genesis 26, it is said that **“he had possessions of flocks and of herds, and great store of servants”** so some read it; others that he had great store of husbandry. It comes all to one purpose, for the greatness of the household or multitude of servants were for those

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**Calvary**

Friendless and faint, with martyred  
steps and slow,  
Faint for the flesh, but for the spirit  
free

Stung by the mob that came to see the  
show,

The Master toiled along to Calvary;  
We jibed Him, as He went, with  
houndish glee,

Till his dimmed eyes for us did over  
flow;

We cursed His vengeless hands thrice  
wretchedly,--

And this was nineteen hundred years  
ago.

But after nineteen hundred years the  
shame

Still clings, and we have not made  
good the loss

That outraged faith has entered in His  
name.

Ah, when shall come love's courage to  
be strong!

Tell me, O Lord—tell me, O Lord,  
how long