

The Two Pivots

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that God is never ashamed to be called the God of those who live by enduring faith, patiently embracing His promises, and recognizing their true citizenship in heaven.

Scripture: Exodus 3:6, Hebrews 11:16, Hebrews 11:18, Hebrews 11:13, Psalm 115:8, 2 Peter 1:10, Matthew 10:22, Psalm 39:12

Topics: "Faith", "God's Promises", "Christian Pilgrimage"

Description

In "The Two Pivots," C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound truth that God is never ashamed to be called the God of those who live by enduring faith and patient hope. Drawing from Hebrews 11 and Exodus 3, Spurgeon emphasizes the importance of steadfast trust in God's promises and the believer's identity as a pilgrim on earth. This sermon challenges listeners to embrace a heavenly perspective and persevere in faith despite life's trials.

Transcript

"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Exodus 3:6.

"Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared a city for them."

Hebrews 11:16.

YOU remember, dear Friends, that Paul is writing to the Hebrews concerning Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and he says, "God is not ashamed to be called their God." Then, when you turn back to our text in Exodus, you find that God was called their God at the burning bush and, oftentimes, on other occasions, He is called the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. We must not forget that at the time when God appeared to Moses, in the desert, in the bush that burned, but was not consumed, the condition of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was very terrible. They were slaves to the Egyptians. They were an oppressed and downtrodden race. Their male children were taken from them and cast into the river. They were entirely in Pharaoh's hands. They were a degraded people, as all slaves gradually become, and they were unable, of themselves, to rise out of that degradation. Yet, at that very time, God was not ashamed to be called their God! There, with Israel in bondage, Jehovah, whose name is the great I AM—a name which makes all Heaven bright with ineffable Glory—did not disdain to say to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." I do not wonder that the Apostle should note it as a remarkable thing, that He was not ashamed to be called their God!

I have been looking into this text very earnestly and trying to find out exactly what was the meaning of the Holy Spirit in it, and I think I have discovered a clue in two words which it contains. First, "Therefore." "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God"—and next, "for." "For He has prepared for them a city." As a door hangs upon two hinges, so my golden text turns upon these two pivots—"therefore" and, "for."

I. I shall ask you to keep your Bibles open at the 11th of Hebrews, that you may see, first, "THEREFORE." Therefore God is not ashamed to be called the God of His people. Look at the 18th verse—"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" and so on. "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God."

To begin with, then, the Lord was not ashamed to be called His people's God because they had faith in Him. You read here of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob—and then Paul says, "These all died in faith." If a man believes in God, trusts Him—believes that His promise is true and that He will keep it—believes that God's command is right and, therefore, ought to be obeyed—God is never ashamed to be called that man's God. He is not the God of unbelievers, for they act contrary to His will. They set up their own will in opposition to His—many of them even doubt His existence, they deny His power, they distrust His love—and, therefore, He is not called their God. But when a man comes to trust God and to accept His Word, from that moment God sees in that man the works of His Grace which are very precious in His eyes, and He is not ashamed to be called that man's God.

Notice that it is said, "These all died in faith," so that they did not believe in God for a little while and then become unbelievers, but, throughout the whole of their lives, from the moment when they were called by God's Grace, they continued to believe Him—they trusted Him till they came to their graves—so that this epitaph is written over the mausoleum where they all lie asleep, "These all died in faith." Ah, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, it is very easy to say, "I believe," and to get very enthusiastic over the notion that we have believed. But so to believe as to persevere to the end—this is the faith which will save the soul! "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." The faith that many waters cannot drown and the fiercest fires cannot burn—the faith that plods on throughout a long and weary life—the faith that labors on, doing whatever service God appoints it. The faith that waits patiently, expecting the time when every promise of God shall be fulfilled to the letter when its hour has come—that is the faith which, if it is in a man, makes him such a man that God is not ashamed to be called his God! I put it to every one of you, have you a faith that will hold on and hold out—not a faith that starts with a fine spurt, but a faith that runs from the starting place to the goal? Some of you, I know, have believed in God these twenty, thirty, forty, or even fifty years. Just before I came to this service, I stood by the bedside of a dear Brother who is the nearest to Job of any man I ever saw, for he is covered from head to foot with blisters—I might almost say, "wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores"—and yet he is as happy as anyone among us, joyful and cheerful as he talks about the time when he shall be "with Christ, which is far better."

Oh, that is the faith we want! "These all died in faith," "therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God." He is not the God of apostates, for He has said, "If any man draws back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him." If he has put his hand to the plow and looks back, he is not worthy of the Kingdom of God. It is the man who steadily and perseveringly, resting in his God and believing Him against all that may be said by God's foes, holds on until he sees the King in His beauty in the land which is very far off. Of such a man it may be truly said that God is not ashamed to be called his

God!

Now let us come back to the Scripture. We cannot do better than keep close to it, for our text is only to be understood by the context. Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture. The locks of Scripture are only to be opened with the keys of Scripture! There is no lock in the whole Bible which God meant us to open without a key to fit it somewhere in the Bible—and we are to search for it until we find it. Now read on in the 18th verse, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises." That is to say, the things that God promised to them, He did not give them in their mortal life, and they did not always expect that He would do so. They were a waiting people. God loves those who are like Himself. I am not now speaking of His love of benevolence, for with that love He loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, but I am speaking of the love of complacency which makes Him not ashamed to be called our God. In that sense, God loves those who are like Himself—and God is a waiting God—He is never in a hurry. How wondrous is the leisure of the Eternal!

When He is coming to help His people, He is quick, indeed! "He rode upon a cherub, and did fly, yes, He did fly upon the wings of the wind." But, oftentimes, He waits and tarries till some men count it slackness. But He does not reckon time as we do. With God, a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. So, being a waiting God, He loves a waiting people. He loves a man who can take the promise and say, "I believe it. It may never be fulfilled to me in this life, but I do not need that it should be. I am perfectly willing that it should be fulfilled when God intends that it should be." Abraham saw Christ's day afar off, but he never saw Christ—yet he rejoiced in the promise of which he did not receive the fulfillment! Isaac did not see Christ except in a vision of the things that were long afterwards to come to pass. Jacob did not hear that joyful sound, which—

"Kings and Prophets waited for, And sought, but never found." But they were perfectly willing to wait and God was not ashamed to be called the God of such a waiting people!

You remember Mr. Bunyan's description of the two children, Passion and Patience? Passion would have his best things now, and he had them. But he soon spoiled them, misused them and abused them. But Patience would have his best things last and, as Bunyan very prettily says, "There is nothing to come after the last." Therefore, when Patience got his best things, they lasted on forever and forever. God, loves not the passion, but He loves the patience. "The husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth and has long patience for it." And I would gladly imitate him. "My Soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him." The worldly man lives in the present, but that is a poor way of living, worthy only of the beasts that perish.

Look on the sheep and bullocks in the pasture—what kind of life is theirs? They also live in the present. If they have grass enough for today, they are perfectly satisfied. The butcher's knife has no terrors for them and neither do they, in the cold of winter, look forward to the bright days of summer. They cannot look before them and God loves not men who are like the beasts of the field! He is ashamed to be called their God. But He loves the man who gets to live in eternity, for God Himself lives there! To God there is no past, present, or future—He sees all at a single glance. And when a man comes to feel that he is not living simply in today which will so soon end, but that he is living in the eternity which will never end. When he is rejoicing in the Covenant, "ordered in all things, and sure," made from before the foundation of the world—when a man feels that he is living in the future as well as the present, that his vast estates are on the other side of Jordan, that his chief joy is up there where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and that his own heart has gone up there where his treasure is, for "where your treasure is, there will your heart be

also"—when the affection is set, not upon things below, but upon things above—that is the man whom God loves because he has learned how to live in God's atmosphere, in God's own eternity! He has risen above the beggarly elements of time and space. He is not circumscribed by Almanacs, days, months and years—his thoughts range right away from that glorious declaration, "I have loved you with an everlasting love," to those endless, dateless periods when the everlasting love of God will still be the constant delight of His people!

I see, then, why it is written that "God, is not ashamed to be called their God," because they are content to live without having received the promises, but to keep on patiently waiting with a holy, joyful confidence, till the hour of God's gracious purpose shall arrive and the promise shall be fulfilled.

Now read on in the 18th verse, and see whether this description fits yourself, dear Friend. "But having seen them afar off." So they were a far-seeing people. God, you know, sees everything. And He loves people who can see afar off. The gods of the heathen have eyes, but they see not. And the Psalmist says, "They that make them are like unto them." So they that worship a blind god are a blind people! But they that worship a seeing God are, themselves, made to see, for they are numbered with the pure in heart who shall see God! It is a grand thing when a man can see infinitely further than these poor eyes can carry, far beyond the range of the strongest telescope, when he can see beyond death—and see beyond the Judgment Seat and see right into Heaven and there behold the Lamb leading His glorified flock to the living fountains of waters, and the saints, with tearless eyes, forever bowing before the Throne of God and the Lamb! God is not ashamed to be called the God of the people who can do this! God is ashamed to be called the God of you blind people, whose eyes have never been opened. But when He opens your eyes, then He becomes your God and He is not ashamed to be so called, for He it is that gives us this blessed power to see! Until spiritual sight is thus bestowed upon us, we are blind. But when God has given us sight, then He is not ashamed to acknowledge us as His children, nor is He ashamed to acknowledge that He, Himself, is our God!

I appeal to you whom I am now addressing and ask whether you can see God's promises afar off? There are some who say, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Yes, it may be so with the poor birds that sing here, but, for my part, I am willing to wait till I can have the one in the bush if it is in the bush that burned with fire because God was there! You may have the bird in the hand, if you will. You will soon pluck off its feathers, it will speedily die in your hand and there will come an end to it. But there are other birds which, as yet, we cannot reach, but which are really ours, and if we cannot at present grasp them, we are willing to wait God's time—because we can see that they will be in our hands in the future, we can already see them "afar off." Unhappy is the man who sees nothing but what he calls, "the main chance," or who sees nothing but that which is within a few feet of him. Wretched, indeed, is he who lives only to get money, or to gain honor—whose whole life is spent in the pursuit of personal comfort, but who never had his eyes opened enough to see the eternal things, and who never was able to set a value upon anything but what could be paid for with pounds, shillings and pence. Beloved, have you seen the promises afar off? Has the Lord opened your eyes to see eternal things? Then it is written concerning you, also, "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God."

Now pass on to the next sentence, for every word is fruitful with meaning—"and were persuaded of them, and embraced them." They were people who rejoiced in things unseen. You will find that, in the Revised Version, the words, "persuaded of them," are left out, and very properly so, for there is no doubt whatever that they were not in the original, but were added by somebody who wished to explain the meaning to us. The Greek is properly rendered, "but having seen them afar off, greeted them," but I like, even better, the

translation, "embraced them." It means that as for the things which are promised to us, if we are Believers, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we have, from afar, seen those promised things and we have welcomed them. Or, to use our Authorized Version, we have "embraced them." We have pressed them to our bosom, we have hugged them to our heart, we have loved them in our very soul, we have rejoiced in them! They have filled our spiritual nature full of music and all the bells of our being are ringing merry peals because of the blessed promises of our God. Now, when a man is of that mind, God is not ashamed to be called his God!

Let me ask you then, dear Friend—What is it that you are embracing? Is it some earthly thing? Does your heart love and cling to that which you can see, and touch and handle? Is that your chief delight? Then God is ashamed to be called your God because you are an idolater! You are worshipping some created thing. But if you can say of Christ, "He is all my salvation and all my desire," then God is not ashamed to be called your God. Remember what David said—"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart," for God is able to give to a man his desires when all his heart is delighting in his God—and God is not ashamed to be called his God. The Lord's love is not set upon merely material objects. The infinite heart of God loves truth, righteousness, purity and everything that is holy and glorious. And if your heart does the same, God is not ashamed to be called your God. But if you do not love these things, you have neither part nor lot in God—you are a stranger to Him and, though I speak this solemn Truth of God in gentle language, I pray that it may drop like lye upon your spirit and burn its way into your very soul! What an awful thing it must be to be without God—to have no part nor lot in Him—never to be able to say, "My God, my Father," but only to speak of Him as a God—an unknown God, another man's God, but no God to you! May it not be so with you, my Friends! If you can say that you have seen the promises from afar and have, by faith, embraced them, then God is not ashamed to be called your God.

Pass on to the next sentence—"and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." They acknowledged that they were not at home here. Abraham never built a house! Isaac never lived anywhere but in a tent and, though Jacob tried to dwell in a settled habitation, he got into trouble through it and he was bound, still, to be a tent-dweller. The reason why they lived in tents was because they wanted to show to all around them that they did not belong to that country. There were great cities with walls which, as men said, reached to Heaven, but they did not go to dwell in those cities. You remember that Lot did, yet he was glad enough to get out again—"saved, yet so as by fire." But Abraham, Isaac and Jacob kept away from other men, for they were commanded to dwell alone and not to be numbered among the nations. Nor were they—they kept themselves apart from other people as strangers and sojourners here below, so, for that very reason, God is not ashamed to be called their God!

Remember how David said to the Lord, "I am a stranger with You, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were." That is a very amazing expression—"a stranger with You"—blessed be God, not "a stranger to You," but, "a stranger with You." That is to say, God is a stranger here—it is His own world and He made it, but when Christ, who is the Son of God, and the Creator of the world, came into it, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." And they soon made Him feel that the only treatment which He would receive at their hands was this—"This is the Heir. Come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours." There was no man who ever lived who was a truer Man than was Christ the Lord. But there was never a Man who was more unlike the rest of men. He was a homely Man, a home-loving Man to the last degree, yet He was never at home. This world was not His rest. He had nowhere to lay His head and what was true, naturally, was also true spiritually. This world offered Christ no rest whatever.

Now, dear Friends, how is it with us? Do we belong to this world, or to the unseen? How do you feel about this matter? Do you feel at home here? I think that we are often compelled to cry with the Psalmist, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" We wish to do good to others as far as we can. We are men of peace, but when we speak, they are for war and we realize the truth of our Lord's words, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." The more a man comes right straight out for God, the more opposition he is sure to meet with! Be half-asleep and nobody will say much against you. But wake up and be active for God and for His Christ and you will soon discover that the seed of the serpent still has the serpent's venom in it—and it hates the Seed of the woman as much as it ever did! It must be so and, therefore, always feel that you are only a stranger here and that your business is to go through this world as a traveler passes through a foreign country. He does not speak the language of the people. He does not follow their customs. He is not one of the citizens of the land. He is just a temporary dweller here below and he is on his journey home. If that is the kind of man you are, God is not ashamed to be called your God.

But He is not the God of the earthworms that only want to burrow down into the soil. He is not the God of those who build their nests and say, "Here would we live forever." He is not the God of the man who can say, "Give me a knife and fork, and plenty to eat and drink. Give me suitable clothes to wear in the day and a nice soft bed to sleep on at night. Give me wealth, give me fame—that is all I need—and I will let Heaven go to anyone who wants it!" Jehovah is not the God of Esau, who sells his birthright for a mess of pottage, but He is the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob who have a heritage that they cannot see, and who count the land in which they dwell to be a place of strangers and of sojourners—and they think of themselves as only strangers and sojourners in it.

Now read on a little further. "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." The word translated, "country," might, I think be better rendered, "fatherland." "They who say that they are strangers here declare plainly that they seek a fatherland." The word is sometimes translated, "their own country." "A Prophet is not without honor, save in his own country." It is the same word here in the Greek. It signifies that they sought their own country—their fatherland. Therefore God, who is the Father of all His people, and whose Heaven is their fatherland, is not ashamed to be called their God. Now, dear Friends, are you seeking a fatherland? I put the question to every hearer here—Are you looking for a fatherland? Sir Walter Scott wrote—

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,

Who never to himself has said,

'This is my own, my native land'?

Whose heart has ne'er within him burned,

As home his footsteps he has turned

From wandering on a foreign strand?" So said the patriot poet and we have said it, too, for we are patriots! But yet I venture to say that this is not my home, this is not my fatherland—

"I'm but a stranger here! Heaven is my home."

My fatherland lies out of sight, beyond the everlasting hills, where God dwells and where Christ sits at the right hand of the Father. Now, the men who, by Grace, have been brought to say this, "We are out of our

own country, we are seeking a fatherland," these are the people of whom it is written, "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God."

Paul goes on to say, "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from where they came, they might have had opportunity to have returned." Brothers and Sisters, this is another characteristic of Believers—we have left the world as our home, and joy, and comfort, to seek a better country, but we may go back if we like. There is no compulsion to keep a man a Christian but the compulsion of love. He who is enlisted in the army of Christ may desert if he pleases, but the blessed Grace of God will hold us so that we shall do no such thing! We have plenty of opportunities to return. Oh, how many invite us to turn back! I know how they beckon some of you who have lately come out on the Lord's side. Sometimes it is a female voice that would charm you and there is a great fascination about it, and you have to mind what you are doing lest you become unequally yoked together. Sometimes it is the voice of the world promising you wealth—offering you a better situation, perhaps, if you will go back. But, like Moses, you esteem "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." You have plenty of opportunities to return. There are back entrances to Satan's Kingdom—he does not require you to come in at the front door—he lets you sneak in, again, by the back gate. If you want to go into slavery, again, there are many opportunities of returning! But if you are made by Christ to be, in this respect, like God, immutable, so that you say, "I cannot turn. I cannot change. I must be what Christ has made me. I must stand fast for truth and for holiness, and stand fast as long as I live, so help me, my God"—if you are able to talk like that, then God is not ashamed to be called your God! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, you can get back to the old country whenever you like. But they never will go back—the deep dividing river rolls between them and that land, even as, today, there rolls between some of us and the world the stream in which we have been buried with Christ and, by God's Grace, we shall never cross it again! And, because of that holy determination, God is not ashamed to be called our God.

I finish up my remarks upon the word, "therefore," which is very full of matter, by noticing how the Apostle says, "But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly." That is to say, instead of going back, we are pressing forward towards heavenly things. "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." "The Father seeks such to worship Him." That is, those who are spiritual, who are seeking after heavenly things with all their heart. These are they whom God loves, for God is spiritual. God is heavenly and when He has made us spiritual and made us pant after heavenly things, then He is not ashamed to be called our God.

I have put these points before you as briefly as I could, wishing every moment to be examining myself, and asking you to examine yourselves. Have you a life within you which makes you pant and pine after heavenly things? Whatever you have in this world, do you hold it with a loose hand? Do you feel that it is not your real riches—it is not your true treasure? You know that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all rich men. God blessed them and gave them a great increase to all that they had, but, still, they did not live simply to gather riches! They did not make that their chief delight. If you had asked them, they would have told you that they were inheritors of a mysterious Covenant by which God had bound Himself to be their God, and the God of their seed. And in that Covenant was included the promise that Christ Himself should come out of their loins—and for Him they waited—He was the hope of their spirit. Now, dear Friends, if that is the case with you, also, you can understand the meaning of my text, "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God."

II. I must give but a few minutes to the second part of the text, yet it needs a good deal of thought, for it says, "for He has prepared a city for them." The second pivot word is, "for."

Now go back again to the text in Exodus, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Yet Paul says, "These all died," and we know that our Lord said to the Sadducees, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Is He not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, seeing that they all died? No, because they are not dead, though they died, "for He has prepared for them a city." These men, though they lived and died, and passed out of the world without having received the heritage, are not dead/There is the glory of the matter. When they lay a-dying, the devil might have come and said to them, "Now, what have you got by your Covenant with God? You left father, mother and everything that you had, and went and lived the separated life—and now you are dying out here—what have you got? Nothing but some little holes in the Cave of Machpelah into which they will push your bodies! That is all that you have!"

Oh, but the devil does not know! Or if he does, he is a liar, for they gained everything by that life of faith, for they still live and God has prepared a city for them. And now they have entered that city! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are at the very head of the celestial company, for our Lord said, "Many shall come from the east, and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven." And, by-and-by, Machpelah shall yield up her dead and Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob shall live, again, in the fullest sense, for their bodies as well as their souls shall live again! And Joseph's bones, which he would not allow to lie in Egypt—for he would not let the Egyptians have a scrap of him—shall live, and thus, in their flesh, shall they see God and shall rejoice before Him. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called the God of these people who all died in faith because they are still living—and they shall continue to live forever and ever!

Somebody may, perhaps, say that these people did not receive the promises. Well, they did not literally receive the fulfillment of them. They did not see Christ. They did not witness the descent of the Holy Spirit. They did not hear the Gospel preached. They did not see those wonders that they looked for—so is not God ashamed to be called the God of people who, after all, did not receive the promises? No, because "He has prepared for them a city." They have received the promises now and they shall receive them yet more and more! God will yet cause the Believer's life to be all blessing. Do not be afraid of the consequences of trusting in Christ—you may have the rough side of the road, here, but what we sang, just now, is quite true—

"Afflictions may press me, they cannot destroy, One glimpse of His love turns them all into joy! And the bitterest tears, if He smiles but on them, Like dew in the sunshine, grow diamond and gem! Let doubt, then, and danger my progress oppose— They only make Heaven more sweet at the close. Come joy or come sorrow, whate'er may befall, An hour with my God will make up for them all!"

If God gave to His children gall and wormwood to drink here—yes, if they never had anything but aches and pains from the moment of their conversion till they died—yet they would have the best of the bargain, after all, for there is an eternity of bliss in the Heaven which is prepared for them!

But, further, these people were a sort of gypsies, always moving about and living in tents, different from everybody else. Yes, they were strangers among the people where they dwelt And men often say of us, now, that we cannot be content to go on as other people do. Those Patriarchs were strangers, odd folk, peculiar people. Is not God ashamed to be called their God? No, because they have now gone where they are all right, for their manners and customs are exactly suitable to the place. A very dear old woman, whom I visited when she was dying, said to me, "One thing comforts me, Sir, I do not think that God will ever send me among the wicked, for I never could get on in their company. The best times I have ever had

were when I could sit with a few of the Lord's people and hear them talk about Him. And though I could not always be sure that I was, myself, a Christian, yet I was very much like them and I was very happy when I was with them. I think I shall go to my own company, Sir." Yes, dear Soul, and so she did! And if we are strangers here, we are going to that company where we shall not be strangers! They will understand our language when once we get across the river into the King's own country. "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God" because they speak the language which He speaks, the language of His own courts—and He is not ashamed to say, "These are My people, and I acknowledge them before you all."

Notice, yet again, that these people were seekers and desirers all their lives. "They seek a country." "They desire a better country." Is this a right state of heart for a Christian—to always be seeking and always desiring? Well, Brothers and Sisters, that is the state in which I often am and I wish, still, to stay in that condition—always seeking, always desiring. Whenever God gives me any spiritual blessing, I always seek more. And if He gives me more, I seek for still more! And if He gives me my heart's desire, I pray Him to enlarge my heart that I may desire some greater gift. For, in spiritual things, we may be as covetous as we like! We may say, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And God is not ashamed to be called the God of those who are thus seeking and desiring because He has laid up for them all that they seek! And He has prepared for them all that they desire! I would be ashamed to set a poor person desiring if I could not gratify the desire. I would be ashamed to set a man seeking if I knew that he could not get what he sought after. But because God has prepared a city for these seekers and desirers, He is not ashamed to be called their God!

As I stood, this evening, by the bedside of the dear Brother whom I mentioned to you a little while ago, I could not help saying, "Here is a poor soul covered with boils and blisters, but God is not ashamed to be called his God." And there may be a child of God who is very poor, indeed, with hardly sufficient garments to cover him, but God is not ashamed to be called his God, either. Perhaps his own brother is ashamed to be called his brother. I have even known cases where men have been so wicked as to be ashamed of their own parents because they were not so well off as themselves. But God is never ashamed of His poor people. Yes, and if God's people are persecuted, and ill-used. If they are covered with mud from head to foot, or if they are cast into prison, God is not ashamed to be called their God. In those days when God permitted His people to be fastened up to the cross, or when others were taken to the stake and burnt, and everybody hissed at them, and cast out their name as evil, and said that they were the offscouring of all things—God was not ashamed to be called their God!

I am almost ashamed to say what I am going to say. I really feel my very heart blush that I should have to say it. I have known some professors who have been ashamed to call God their God! Is it not strange that the glorious God of Heaven and earth should call a worm His own, and take mean wretches such as we are, and say, "I am not ashamed to be called their God," and yet that some of these creatures should be so miserably cowardly that they are ashamed to be called the people of God? Oh, write His name on your foreheads! Never be ashamed of it! Ashamed of God? Ashamed of Jesus? Ashamed of the Truth? Ashamed of righteousness? I do not wonder that there is such a text as this—"The fearful"—that is the cowardly—"and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

If you really do love the Lord, come out and show yourself on His side! And if He is not ashamed of you and if your prayer is, "Lord, remember me when you come into Your Kingdom," acknowledge Him as your Lord and Savior now! You who are not members of any Christian Church—you who have believed in Christ, or think you have—and yet have never confessed Him. You who are hiding like rats behind the wall—come out and confess Christ! What are you doing? How can you be soldiers of the Cross and followers of the Lamb if you fear to acknowledge His cause and blush to speak His name? Come out of your hiding places! May God the Holy Spirit draw or drive you out at once! If anything could do it, surely, it should be such a blessed fact as this—that you are numbered among those of whom it is said that "God is not ashamed to be called their God."

God bless you, dear Friends, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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