



"All for me?"

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. (1 Cor 13:8-13)

Sooner or later, we all come to a point in time that we find ourselves face to face with Christ - what shall be our response? The Holy Spirit draws, and the Holy Spirit convicts. Our response is measured by the working of God's Holy Spirit in our hearts. The woman at the well was drawn there by an invisible strand. The woman taken in adultery was brought to Christ against her will, but was blessed. Nicodemus came to satisfy an insatiable hunger for truth - a hunger engendered by the magnetic pull of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, it is the simple and mundane things that are used by the Holy Spirit to disperse light.

Our hymn today had its beginning in a pastor's dining room in Rutherford, New Jersey, more than one hundred years ago; and was prompted by a nearly empty jar of jelly. The pastor's guest, Grant C. Tullar, was known to love jelly, so the pastor said, this is for YOU! Tullar took the jar, assayed its contents and said, "All for me?" This thought had a resounding influence in his musical nature at that very moment. He went immediately to the piano and composed the tune for the beautiful hymn we examine today. But the lyrics he had in mind, "All for Me" obviously needed work. The very next day, Tullar received a letter from Ms. Carrie E. Breck that asked him to compose music to go with the words of this hymn which she had written. Amazingly, the tune of the previous evening fit as perfectly as the glove fits the hand. Thus we have this wonderful and tenderly meaningful hymn given us in 1898.

Early this morning, a good friend asked if I might consider writing about this hymn 'someday.' I knew she had TODAY in mind for it. The more I considered it, the less I could resist its haunting appeal. The tune itself has been pulling at my heartstrings all morning long. So I will submit to the Spirit and write of it.

Face to Face with Christ, My Savior

Face to face with Christ, my Savior,
Face to face—what will it be,
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ Who died for me?

Refrain

Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!

Only faintly now I see Him,
With the darkened veil between,
But a blessed day is coming,
When His glory shall be seen.

Refrain

What rejoicing in His presence,
When are banished grief and pain;
When the crooked ways are straightened,
And the dark things shall be plain.

Refrain

Face to face—oh, blissful moment!
Face to face—to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer,
Jesus Christ Who loves me so.

Refrain

Face to face with Christ, my Savior, Face to face—what will it be, When with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ Who died for me? There are two very different reactions to meeting the Lord face to face - one is that of extreme sorrow and repentance of sins; the other, a willful and self-righteous rebellion to His rule! Adam walked with God, yet he revolted. Pontius Pilate was brought face to face with Christ, but was weak as water and resorted to the politically correct response rather than to do the justice that he knew was merited. The Scribes and Pharisees came face to face with Christ and were incensed that the Son of God would uproot their torrid little kingdoms. The rich young ruler came face to face with Christ, but went away sorrowful because he could not forsake his wealth for a better treasure.

The woman taken in adultery was brought to Christ and uttered not a word in her defense (for there was none). The ones (Jewish rulers) who meant the woman the greatest harm, brought her to the One who could do her the most good - and DID! The fallen woman who came to the Well of Jacob at the noonday hour came face to face with Jesus and her life was changed forever, and her testimony brought others to Him. Nicodemus came to Christ under cover of darkness one night in Jerusalem, but forever after came openly in the light of day. Peter, the night of Jesus' betrayal, looked at Jesus face to face immediately after his third denial of the Lord and went out and wept bitterly for the next three days. What, friend, has been YOUR response to coming face to face with Him? No One of greater love and glory has ever done so much for one who deserves no mercy at all, and no one ever will - but Jesus!

Only faintly now I see Him, With the darkened veil between, But a blessed day is coming,

When His glory shall be seen. As that lovely old hymn writer, Fanny Crosby, demonstrated, that vision that steadily radiates from the portals of a Christian heart is far greater than the dark, pulsating light of the worldly vision of those whose eyesight is 20/20. *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.* Can you just imagine the joy of seeing Christ at that glorious morning of eternal day! All of the mist of the morning shall distill into tears of joy, and the storm clouds evaporate into resplendent brightness. Nothing shall come between to obscure our view of that kind and loving face that was racked with pain for us on the brow of Calvary Mount. Just as the Veil was rent that separated God's people from the Holiest of Holies, so shall it be removed from our eyes to see the Lord directly and not only with the dimming visions of our two eyes, but with our hearts that are One with His. In shrouds of glory shall He appear to disperse all darkness!

What rejoicing in His presence, When are banished grief and pain; When the crooked ways are straightened, And the dark things shall be plain. The purpose of Light is to reveal that which is hidden - both of dangers and blessings. But, in the presence of Christ, no darkness can persist. It shall be swept away as chaff before the gales of love. OUR natural ways are crooked ways, but HIS are ever the straight and Narrow Way. Isaiah tells us what our Lord will do for us: *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.* (Isaiah 40:4-5)

Face to face—oh, blissful moment! Face to face—to see and know; Face to face with my Redeemer, Jesus Christ Who loves me so. Sometimes I try to imagine the love-bought hearts of those humble souls who were moved by the Holy Spirit to write these beautiful hymns, along with the composers of the reverent music to attend them. What gratitude we should have that God used these people to instill love and faith in stronger measure to our hearts. They have brought us evermore closer to a face to face meeting with Christ. WE see Him better, and know Him more fully. *then shall I know even as also I am known.* Love reveals and measures our souls. Love lifted me, love drew me with bands of iron appeal, love will never let me go - and it is His love that is the generator of my love, and my own love only an echo of His.

When we look into the face of Jesus, we shall see a love that defies explanation in its enormity, its sweetness, and its fidelity. His love traverses the farthest reaches of space and time, and beyond. How marvelous!

Has His love been seeded in your heart, and has it borne fruit?