

For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great." (Psalm 25:11)

He who cannot be outraged has no values: to him nothing has appreciable intrinsic value, nothing is sacred. This loss of sense of value together with inability to be outraged is quite prominent today.

Time was when the abuse, murder, or imprisonment of a U.S. citizen was enough to provoke a war. A person who desecrated the American flag publicly was likely to be torn apart in the streets. To insult one's mother was to invite a duel, and violation of the exclusive marital rights of husband and wife was just cause for blood vengeance. None of that matters now. The values associated with citizenship, country, home, chastity, and marriage are no more, so there is no offense connected with their violation.

The same thing can be applied to sin in general. Because men have such a low and cheap concept of righteousness, sin, to them, is cheap, inoffensive, and easily squared. This is an insult to the personal holiness of God, and to the sufferings of our Savior Who paid the penalty for our sins on the cross.

Because men have a light view of sin, they think it can be paid cheaply. A jeweler would be insulted if you offered a hundred dollars for a gem worth half a million. Should you destroy a painting worth a million dollars and then offer its owner \$5.00 compensation for the damages, would he not be outraged? Yet men offer such cheap and worthless sacrifices to God, confident they have more than squared the account for their sins. Church attendance, baptism, tithes and offerings, charitable contributions to the poor, honest living, care for the crippled and indigent are all commendable activities. No Christian should be without such good works. But so far as their worth to compensate for our sins, they are worse than nothing.

The psalmist rightly has only one plea for his sin: the merciful pardon of the LORD. He knows his iniquity is too great for anything else to avail. As we view the sufferings of our Lord on our behalf, let us rid ourselves once and for all of the idea that our sins are something that can be snickered over and paid for with a good works tip. Were that so, God would have never sent His Son to such humiliation. Our sins are so black, hateful and heinous in God's sight that nothing less than the death of Deity can secure us a pardon.

-C.M.