

Once a woman silent stood
 The Two Debtors
 John Newton, 1779,
 from Olney Hymns, vol. 1, hymn 98

Once a woman silent stood
 While Jesus sat at meat;
 From her eyes she poured a flood
 To wash his sacred feet
 Shame and wonder, joy and love;
 All at once possessed her mind:
 That she e'er so vile could prove,
 Yet now forgiveness find.

2. How came this vile woman here,
 Will Jesus notice such?
 Sure, if he a prophet were,
 He would disdain her touch!
 Simon thus, with scornful heart,
 Slighted one whom Jesus loved;
 But her Saviour took her part,
 And thus his pride reprov'd.

3. If two men in debt were bound,
 One less, the other more;
 Fifty, or five hundred pound,
 And both alike were poor;
 Should the lender both forgive,
 When he saw them both distressed;
 Which of them would you believe
 Engaged to love him best?

4. Surely he who most did owe,
 The Pharisee replied;
 Then our Lord, by judging so,
 Thou dost for her decide:
 Simon if like her you knew
 How much you forgiveness need;
 You like her had acted too,
 And welcomed me indeed!

5. When the load of sin is felt,
 And much forgiveness known;
 Then the heart of course will melt,
 Though hard before as stone:
 Blame not then her love and tears,
 Greatly she in debt has been;
 But I have removed her fears,
 And pardoned all her sin.

6. When I read this woman's case,
 Her love and humble zeal;
 I confess, with shame of face,
 My heart is made of steel,
 Much has been forgiv'n to me,
 Jesus paid my heavy score;
 What a creature must I be
 That I can love no more!