

*1 Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?
2 The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.
3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.
(Psalm 10:1-3)*

There is a question that God-fearing people will always ask again, no matter how often it is answered for them: "Why does God stand afar off and seemingly have no concern for me in this trouble? Why am I unable to find Him when I need Him most?" Though we may give a satisfactory answer to it now, yet when we fall into deep trouble and can no longer sense God's presence we will ask it again.

Trouble is most grievous without God's sensible presence. We experience trouble at times and have the comfort of knowing that He is with us. At such times the circumstances do not try us. We pass through them joyfully. Therefore it is of necessity, if we are to experience any trial at all, that God withdraw Himself for a short season. There can be no trial while we experience God's comfort. We must be prepared to walk by faith knowing that God is indeed always near, even when we do not feel that He is. The just shall live by faith.

While the righteous man is mourning and seeking comfort from God, the wicked man, his oppressor, is boasting of his conquests. He actually takes pride in the ways and means he has taken advantage of others. He enriches himself at the expense of others whom he has cheated and then has the audacity to brag about it. Listen to the tone of his conversation. He is always admiring himself for his sharp deals. He victimizes the poor, the weak, and the ignorant and actually thinks himself to be a mighty conqueror. Thus crooked lawyers plunder people who do not know the intricacies of the law. Covetous physicians gouge unknowing patients who are unqualified to challenge the doctor's findings and treatments. The moneyed industrialist and businessman can charge what he pleases to the man who must have his product. Banks and loan sharks have the debtor over a barrel and can keep him paying through the nose. And the charlatan preacher or priest can pick the pockets of his ignorant and superstitious votaries.

It is amazing to note that men bless the successful man in all his covetous practices. They will condemn every other kind of sinner, yet admire the man who gains riches, power and prestige by cleverly plundering people. The Bible tells us God *abhors* such a man! What a shocking thought that we should be blessing the person whom God abhors! We are even prone to emulate such men, and try to gain such a position ourselves. O how sad it is when men had rather gain power and admiration of men rather than the favor of God. Let us give heed to the admonition of James. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

-C.M.