

- 1 *To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm of David. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.*
- 2 *O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.*
- 3 *But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.*
- 4 *Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. (Psalm 4)*

The inspired writers often speak as Jehovah Himself, as it seems the Holy Spirit imparts to them the very heart's cry of the Creator. Such an occasion is this second verse of the fourth Psalm. "*How long will ye turn my glory into shame?*" Man, created in God's image and intended to display a visible image of the glory of an invisible God, has fallen. Instead of glorifying God in his life, he lives it in vanity, deceit and corruption, bringing shame and reproach upon the true and living God. How grieved He is at our reluctance to repent and forsake our evil ways! This longing and willingness of God to save is reflected in Christ's weeping over the city of Jerusalem, which is about to reject and crucify Him. He says again, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

The hope of such fallen creatures as us is revealed in the first sentence of the song, "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness." Sinful men have no righteousness of their own. Their hope of audience with a holy God is His own righteousness imparted to them through faith in Christ. God is the source and Creator of all true righteousness. Therefore we can never hope to impress Him with our righteousness. What we have is simply His own, given to us freely by His grace.

Since we are sinful creatures and have no claim on God's goodness, we come to Him pleading His mercy. We believe that we shall be heard because He is a merciful God, and because He has proven Himself in the past. Our past help is our present hope in God. Such distress in which we must call upon God "enlarges" us . . . it causes us to grow in grace, if for no other reason than simply because such distresses bring us into a close and dependent relationship with God. The Lord has set apart such God-fearing persons for Himself, and they will surely be heard of Him when they call upon Him.

God's mercy to sinners does not encourage them to sin and presume upon His grace. Contrariwise, it makes sin so much more to be hated by those who truly love God. They stand in awe of His holiness and goodness, they commune with Him in their hearts. Their eyes are upon His face, and their hearts are filled with His love. The more we cultivate and abide in such an attitude toward God, the less likely we are to fall into sin.

-C.M.