

A FOURFOLD PRAYER

“Look upon me and be merciful to me, as your custom is toward those who love your name.

“Direct my steps by your word and let no iniquity have dominion over me.

“Redeem me from the oppression of man that I may keep your precepts.

“Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes.” Psalm 119:132-135

Nothing is beyond the eye of God. His omniscience renders all things and beings open to His divine scrutiny. No deed or event escapes His observation. The poet prays not merely for God to see him but for His divine Face to be toward him. This is a posture of interest and love. His own are not merely cogs in the machinery of the universe, but objects of His particular and gracious watch-care. If we would live under the watchful eye of God, we can be certain he sees our sins and knows our weaknesses and failures. Therefore we dare not hope to be under God’s eye except we also be objects of His mercy. The poet has good confidence that such mercy will be his. The reason is that he is praying to the God of all mercies, and these mercies are always upon those who love His name. As I pray this prayer therefore, I should ask myself, “am I indeed one who loves God’s name?” If so then I may rejoice that as His eye is on the sparrow, so He surely watches me.

If I have found mercy, may I now find holiness. The lovingkindness and tender mercies of the Almighty never encourage laxity in saints. Rather, it provokes a longing to please God in his walk. We pray that His wonderful word will order our every step. May His divine power break the dominion and bondage of every sin. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. May He Who is the lover of our souls be the absolute King of our lives.

Deliver me also from the fear of man. Well we know that the fear of man brings a snare. And many are those who would, by intimidation and threats, order our lives according to their wills rather than God’s. Some who would not break God’s law to gratify their lusts would do so to escape the tyranny of men or to gain their smiles. How foolish, to hold fear of man above fear of God! We will not obey God with a perfect heart until we are willing to be faithful whatever the consequences.

Finally, in all of this we seek the smile of God in His countenance toward us. We would be conscious, sensible, of His love. As He teaches us to know His word better, we shall with such increased knowledge of truth be equally endowed with and increase in consciousness of His love. Has He not promised as much? *“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him”*. John 14: 23. These are included in the words of the Lord Jesus to His disciples as He bequeathed His joy to them before He went to the cross. May our joy be full in Christ.

-C. M.