

*Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins...O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.” (Psalm 25:16-20)*

Five things are common to all of us in the course of time: desolation, affliction, troubles, distresses, and pain. In the midst of them we may think we alone suffer them, but all men do. There is a difference, however, in how different people react in them. The psalmist tells us the reaction of the God-fearing person.

He cries to God, not to men. He would have God’s attention. He wants to know that God sympathetically views his circumstances, that the Lord will look upon him with intentions of deliverance.

Although he is a God-fearing man and serves Him fervently, he does not assume that God owes him anything. He does not presume upon God’s grace or demand God’s help; he cries for mercy. We must never forget that God is always free in His mercy. He is never obliged to give it, never our debtor in any sense.

The God-fearing person asks to be brought out of his distresses. This has special meaning. We who love God want Him to come near unto us, to be with us in our troubles as was the fourth man in the fiery furnace. We do not expect God to send someone or something else to get us out of trouble. We desire Him to bring us out personally. He is a God that is near at hand, a very present help in the time of trouble.

The holy person remembers his sins when he gets into trouble. He knows the chastening hand of the Lord and, when adverse circumstances appear, he has no trouble at all finding some reason he deserves such afflictions. He can never say, as the ungodly do, “What have I done to deserve this?” Rather, he cries to be absolved from the guilt of his sins which well could have brought the trouble.

Finally the person of faith expresses his ground of hope. “I have put my trust in thee.” We have no other reason to believe that we shall be heard, or that we shall not utterly perish except that our hope and trust is in God alone. He will not let such faith be in vain.

-C.M.