

*But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.  
Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.  
Thou hast given us like sheep [appointed] for meat; and hast scattered us among the  
heathen.  
Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase [thy wealth] by their price.  
Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are  
round about us.  
Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.  
My confusion [is] continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me,  
For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and  
avenger.  
All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in  
thy covenant.  
Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;  
Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow  
of death.  
If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;  
Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.  
Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the  
slaughter. (Psalms 44:9-22)*

Psalm 44:9-22 sets forth the church's suffering and desolation which are *uncaused* by sin or apostasy. *Lack of success*, God does not bless our labors with conversions; *scattered*, just a few of us here and there; *victimized and plundered by enemies*, scared slandered, mocked, reviled, held in contempt. Does God get any glory out of this?

Yet it is only in such circumstances that faith will be tried and found changeless. It is only such circumstances that prove our best "bow and sword" will not get the job done. We learn that God alone can give the increase and glorify the church. Success, glory and honor all attract trash. Dishonor, shame and failure insure that only the faithful, those who "have nowhere else to go," will continue to hold their profession.

-C.M.