

the opening verses unlock the problem to a large degree. The Psalmist makes it plain that he is in a position of despite without cause. He had done nothing to promote the difficulty in which he is found. In such circumstance as this the individual is suffering the affliction of his foes only because they are opposed to God (vss 1-2). Not being able to harm God, they take out their wrath on God's man. But there is no indication that he has given up either his prayer or acts of charity towards them. It would seem that it is possible to be just and kind even when punishment is involved.

In v. 4, two striking points greet us--again. The Psalmist has expressed love already towards the enemy. The Hebrew gives us to understand that in the place of his love (for) they have given themselves as adversaries. This is how the blessing of the writer has been rewarded, by the adverse actions of the wicked. But the Psalmist has not allowed this to dishearten him, he has gone to prayer and the expression "I--a prayer" indicates the extent of his supplication and the considerable continuing depth thereof.

Apparently prayer failed to move his foes so he went a "second mile" and did good to those who opposed him. The evil that has been accorded him by his foes has been granted in return for this good and when he has continued in a show of love they have besieged him with hatred. What more could the writer do? He has expended every possibility, he has shown love, offered prayer, done good--but the enemy has rejected it all.

Surely it is no accident that the writer has followed the steps of Matthew 5:43-44 so far. His conduct is a near perfect parallel to the things that Christ prescribed. It is feared that the force of the