

The Lord's Testing

and

Love



A Blacksmith Speaks

“The genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:7)

A number of years ago a Christian blacksmith, whose life was full of suffering and pain, was challenged by an unbeliever to account for all the suffering God had allowed in his life. His response to the challenge went something like this:

“As a blacksmith, I often take a piece of iron and put it into the fire to bring it to a white heat. Then I put it on the anvil and strike it hard a few times to see if it can be tempered. If I think it can, I plunge it into cold water, suddenly changing the temperature.

“I repeat this heating and quenching process several times. Then I put the iron on the anvil and hammer it and bend it. After it cools, I rasp it and file it, turning it into some useful article which will serve for many years. If, however, when I first strike it on the anvil, I see that it cannot be

tempered, I throw it onto the scrap pile and sell it for a few pennies.

“I believe my God and Father has been testing me to see if I can be tempered. He has repeatedly put me into the fire and into the water. I have tried to bear it patiently and quietly, and my daily prayer has been: ‘Lord, put me into the fire if You will. Put me into the water if You think I need it. Do anything You please, Lord—only don’t throw me onto the scrap pile.’ ”

Our life is like the face of a clock, and the hands are God’s hands passing over. The short hand is the hand of discipline and the long hand that of grace. Slowly and surely the hand of discipline must pass, and God speaks at every hour; but over and over the hand of grace also passes, showering us with twelve-times blessing for each stroke of discipline and trial. Both hands are fastened to the same secure center point—the great unchanging heart of the God of love.

If you are going through a period of testing as difficult as that of the old blacksmith, do not forget God’s hand of grace. Our lov-

ing Father says to us as His sons, what He said to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Cor. 12:9).

In this wonderful Father and son relationship into which he has brought us, He also says to us: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives" (Heb. 12:5-6).

The Lord's testing is not only a sign of His preparing us for usefulness, but it is also a sign of His love for us. Finally, the Scripture says it is "for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness" and "afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb. 12:10-11). May it be so with each of us.

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