Valuable Objects in Nature Are Pruned or Refined

Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. Isaiah 48:10, NKJV.

The furnace fires are not to destroy, but to refine, ennoble, sanctify. Without trial we would not feel so much our need of God and His help; and we would become proud and self-sufficient. In the trials that come to us we should see the evidences that the Lord's eye is upon us, and that He means to draw us to Himself. It is not the whole, but the wounded, who need a physician; it is those who are pressed almost beyond the point of endurance who need a Helper.

The fact that we are called upon to endure trial proves that the Lord sees something in us very precious, which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name, He would not spend time in refining us. We do not take special pains in pruning brambles. Christ does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He tests.

The blacksmith puts the iron and steel into the fire that he may know what manner of metal they are. The Lord allows His chosen ones to be placed in the furnace of affliction, in order that He may see what temper they are of, and whether He can mold and fashion them for His work.

It may be that much work needs to be done in your character-building, that you are a rough stone which must be squared and polished before it can fill a place in God's temple. You need not be surprised if, with chisel and hammer, God cuts away the sharp corners of your character, until you are prepared to fill the place He has for you. No human being can accomplish this work. Only by God can it be done. And be assured that He will not strike one useless blow. His every blow is struck in love, for your eternal happiness. He knows your infirmities, and works to restore, not to destroy.

When trials arise that seem unexplainable, we should not allow our peace to be spoiled. However unjustly we may be treated, let not passion arise. By indulging a spirit of retaliation, we injure ourselves. We destroy our own confidence in God, and grieve the Holy Spirit. There is by our side a witness, a heavenly messenger, who will lift up for us a standard against the enemy. He will shut us in with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Beyond this, Satan cannot penetrate. He cannot pass this shield of holy light.--The Signs of the Times, August 18, 1909.