The Uses of Adversity

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. Isaiah 61:3.

Affliction and adversity may cause much inconvenience and may bring great depression, but it is prosperity that is dangerous to spiritual life. Unless the human subject is in constant submission to the will of God, unless he is sanctified by the truth and has the faith that works by love and purifies the soul, prosperity will surely arouse the natural inclination to presumption....

In the valley of humiliation, where men depend on God to teach them and to guide their every step, there is comparative safety. But let everyone who has a living connection with God pray for ... those who are standing on a lofty pinnacle and who, because of their exalted position, are supposed to have much wisdom. Unless such men feel their need of an Arm stronger than the arm of flesh to lean upon, unless they make God their dependence, their view of things will become distorted and they will fall.

The Lord has instructed me to urge everyone to realize that man is human. The church of Christ is in need of close communion with the Lord Jesus. Those who feel most their dependence upon God are usually those who have the least amount of earthly treasure on which to depend.

Of all the trees, the Scotch fir tree is one of the best from which Christians may draw inspiring lessons. The Scotch fir requires less soil for its roots than any other tree. In a dry soil and amidst
barren rocks it finds sufficient nourishment to keep it as green in the winter as in the summer. With the least amount of earth about its roots, it towers above all the other trees of the wood, reaching the highest toward heaven....

The church members who are standing in their lot and place are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. Although their surrounding circumstances may be adverse, yet, like the fir tree with little soil about its roots, they constantly reach heavenward, drawing nourishment from above. Like the fragrant boughs of the fir tree, they impart grace for grace received. The hidden nourishment that comes from God is returned to Him in purest service.... God calls for every man's best energies. No man can find in any human being the strength that will enable him to serve God with all his powers. He must be a partaker of the divine nature.—Manuscript 145, September 2, 1902, "Diary."

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