

Silver In The Refiner's Fire

'He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver' Malachi 3:3

Sometimes, we find ourselves surrounded by trials and sorrow. At such times we find it hard, very hard, to understand what God is doing. We can't work out why, if God loves us, that He causes us to endure real suffering and pain. Yes, God causes it! He wills it to be so otherwise it couldn't possibly happen. He purposed it in his eternal counsel else it could never have come to pass. God, we know, brings it to pass by his everywhere present power as his Fatherly providence in our lives. Undoubtedly, God is the first cause he uses many second causes and means and instruments to fulfil his purposes but it is His hand that we feel! God is willing that we should experience that exact hardship and suffering he wills that it should wound us and thwart our plans, sometimes break our hearts, melt us down, and bring us sometimes completely to the end of ourselves. A time of trial can confront us with a most challenging experience of our Christian life. Why? If God loves me, does he do this to me? That is the question we must all face in one way or other, and some time or other. Well, here is an illustration which makes the answer perfectly clear! Be encouraged to read it and digest it well then go on to read Isaiah 43:1-2, Romans 5: 1-5 and 8:14-18, 28-30, 2Corinthians 4:15-18, 1 Peter 1:3-9, and James 1:2-4 and 12. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. This verse puzzled some saints in a Bible study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible Study. That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining Silver. As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot; then she thought again about the verse that says: 'He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.' She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed. The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, 'How do you know when the silver is fully refined?' He smiled at her and answered, 'Oh, that's easy -- when I see my image in it.' If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has his eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image reflecting in you. And, whatever you're going through, you're a better person in the end.

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