

Trials

Author Unknown

You perhaps recall the story of the blacksmith who gave his heart to God. Though conscientious in his living, still he was not prospering materially. In fact, it seems that from the time of his conversion more trouble, affliction and loss were sustained than ever before. Everything seemed to be going wrong.

One day a friend who was not a Christian stopped at the little forge to talk to him. Sympathizing with him in some of his trials, the friend said "It seems strange to me that so much affliction should pass over you just at the time when you have become an earnest Christian. Of course, I don't want to weaken your faith in God or anything like that. But here you are, God's help and guidance, and yet things seem to be getting steadily worse. I can't help wondering why it is."

The blacksmith did not answer immediately, and it was evident that he had thought the same question before. But finally, he said "You see here the raw iron which I have to make into horse's shoes. You know what I do with it? I take a piece and heat it in the fire until it is red, almost white with the heat. Then I hammer it unmercifully to shape it as I know it should be shaped. Then I plunge it into a pail of cold water to temper it. Then I heat it again and hammer it some more. And this I do until it is finished."

"But sometimes I find a piece of iron that won't stand up under this treatment. The heat and the hammering and the cold water are too much for it. I don't know why it fails in the process, but I know it will never make a good horse's shoe." He pointed to a heap of scrap iron that was near the door of his shop. "When I get a piece that cannot take the shape and temper, I throw it out on the scrap heap. It will never be good for anything."

He went on, "I know that God has been holding me in the fires of affliction and I have felt His hammer upon me. But I don't mind, if only He can bring me to what I should be. And so, in all these hard things my prayer is simply this: Try me in any way you wish, Lord, only don't throw me on the scrap heap."