The Silversmith

In our Sunday morning service recently we sung *Purify My Heart*:

Purify my heart, let me be as gold and precious silver;
purify my heart, let me be as gold, pure gold.

Refiner's fire, my heart's one desire is to be holy,
set apart for you, Lord.
I choose to be holy, set apart for you, my Master,
ready to do your will.

It brought to my mind the story of the Silversmith. This little parable by an unknown author is a beautiful picture of the Lord's meticulous care for us as, through all our trials and tribulations, He gradually conforms us to the image of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ…

"Some time ago, a few ladies met together to study the scriptures. While reading the third chapter of Malachi, they came upon a remarkable expression in the third verse:

And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.

"One lady proposed to visit a silversmith, and report back to them on what he said about the subject. She went accordingly, and without telling the object of her errand, begged the silversmith to tell her about the process of refining silver.

"After he had fully described it to her, she asked, *'But Sir, do you sit while the work of refining is going on?*' *'Oh yes, madam,*' replied the silversmith; *'I must sit with my eyes steadily fixed on the furnace, for if the time necessary for refining be exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver will be injured.'*

"The lady at once saw the beauty, and comfort too, of the expression, *He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.*

"God sees it needful to put His children into a furnace; His eye is steadily intent on the work of purifying, and His wisdom and love are both engaged in the best manner for us. Our trials do not come at random, and He will not let us be tested beyond what we can endure (1 Corinthians 10:13).

"Before she left, the lady asked one final question, *'When do you know the process is complete?*'

"*'Why, that is quite simple,'* replied the silversmith. *'When I can see my own image in the silver, the refining process is finished.'* "

"For he is like a refiner's fire … and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver ... and refine [us] as gold and silver" (Malachi 3:2-3).

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried* with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7).

**Tried: "To bring forth the good in us or to make us good"*

"We shall also bear the image of the heavenly … changed into the same image" (1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

May you know God's care for you in any trials you may undergo this month,
Elizabeth McDonald
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