LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct h
we enter the realm of mystery, and it is idle to deny it. Better far to acknowledge with the wise
the LORD: how can a man then understand his own way?" (Pro 20:24).

In the narrower sense of the term, Job did know the way that he took. What that "way" was
verses. "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I
marandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (J
chose was the best way, the scriptural way, God's way—"his way."

What do you think of that way, dear reader? Was it not a grand selection? Ah, not only "be
you made a similar choice? Can you say, "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, an
you can, praise Him for His enabling grace. If you cannot, confess with shame your failu
sufficient grace. Get down on your knees at once, and mp^{10}osom your contrail to God. Hide and k
per it is written, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cl
confess" (1Jo 1:9). Does not verse 15 explain your failure, my failure, dear reader? Is it
trampled before God's commandments and because we have so lightly esteemed His Word tha
His ways? Then let us, even now and daily, seek grace from on high to heed His commandme
our hearts.

"He knoweth the way that I take." Which way are you talking—the narrow way that leadeth
that leadeth to destruction? Make certain on this point, dear friend. Scripture declares, "So
account of himself to God" (Rom 14:12). But you need not be deceived or uncertain. The Lor
(Job 14:9).

3. **DIVINE TESTING:** "When he hath tried me." "The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace
tried the hearts" (Pro 17:3). This was God's way with Israel of old, and it is His way with C
Israel entered Canaan, as Moses reviewed their history since leaving Egypt, he said, "And th
way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, a
what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no" (Deu 8:2). I
tests, proves, humbles us.

"When he hath tried me." If we realized this more, we should pray up better in the hour of
tient under suffering. The daily irritations of life, the things that annoy so much—what is the
permitted? Here is the answer: God is "trying" you! That is the explanation (in part, at least
that crushing of your earthly hopes, that great loss—God was, is, testing you. God is trying y
your faith, your patience, your love, your fidelity.[11]

"When he hath tried me." How fearfully God's saints see only Satan as the cause of their
great enemy as responsible for much of their sufferings. But there is no comfort for the pea
that the devil does bring upon much that harasses us. But above Satan is the Lord Almighty
pair of our heads without God's permission; and when he is allowed to disturb and distract u
using him to "try" us. Let us learn then, to look beyond all secondary causes and instrumenta
all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph 1:11). This is what Job did.

In the opening chapter of the book that bears [Job's] name, we find Satan optimizing permi

How much we lose by forgetting this! What a stay for the trouble-tossed heart to know that no matter what form the testing may take, no matter what the agent that annoys, it is God Who is "trying" His children. What a perfect example the Savior sets us! When He was approached in the garden, and Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the Savior said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (Joh 18:11). Men were about to vent their awful rage upon Him, the serpent would bruise His heel, but He looks above and beyond them. Dear reader, no matter how bitter its contents (infinitely less than that which the Savior drained), let us accept the cup as from the Father's hand.

In some moods, we are apt to question the wisdom and right of God to try us. So often we murmur at His dispensations.[12] Why should God lay such an intolerable burden upon me? Why should others be spared their loved ones, and mine taken? Why should health and strength, perhaps the gift of sight, be denied me? The first answer to all such questions is, "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom 9:20)! It is wicked insubordination for any creature to call into question the dealings of the great Creator. "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom 9:20). How earnestly each of us needs to cry unto God that His grace may silence our rebellious lips and still the tempest within our desperately wicked hearts!

Again, in 1 Peter 4:12-13, we are told, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings: that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." The same thoughts are expressed here as in the previous passage. There is a needs-be[13] for our "trials," and therefore we are to think them not strange—we should expect them. And, too, there is again the blessed outlook of being richly recompensed at Christ's return. Then, there is the added word that not only should we meet these trials with faith's fortitude, but we should rejoice in them also, inasmuch as we are permitted to have fellowship in "the sufferings of Christ" (2Co 1:5). He, too, suffered: sufficient then, "for the disciple [to] be as his master" (Mat 10:24-25).

"When he hath tried me." Dear Christian reader, there are no exceptions. God had only one Son without sin, but never one without sorrow. Sooner or later, in one form or another, trial—sore and heavy—will be our lot. "And sent Timotheus, our brother…to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto" (1Th 3:2-3). Again, it is written, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Act 14:22). It has been so in every age. Abram was "tried," tried severely. So, too, were Joseph, Jacob, Moses, David, Daniel, the Apostles, etc.

3. The ultimate issue: "I shall come forth as gold." Observe the tense here. Job did not imagine that he was pure gold already. "I shall come forth *as gold*," he declared. He knew full well that there was yet much dross[14] in him. He did not boast that he was already perfect. Far from it. In the final chapter of his book, we find him saying, "I abhor myself" (42:6). And well he might; and well may we. As we discover that in our flesh there dwelleth "no good thing," as we examine ourselves and our ways in the light of God's Word and behold our innumerable failures, as we think of our countless sins, both of omission and commission—good reason have we for abhorring ourselves. Ah, Christian reader, there is much dross about us. But it will not ever be thus.

"I shall come forth as gold." Job did not say, "When he hath tried me I *may* come forth as gold," or "I *hope to* come forth as gold," but with full confidence and positive assurance he declared, "I *shall* come forth as gold." But how did he know this? How can *we* be sure of the happy issue? Because the divine purpose cannot fail. He that hath begun a good work in us "will finish it" (Phi 1:6). How can we be sure of the happy issue? Because the divine promise is sure: "The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me" (Psa 138:8). Then, be of good cheer, tried and troubled one! The process may be unpleasant and painful, but the issue is charming and sure.

"I shall come forth as gold." This was said by one who knew affliction and sorrow as few among the sons of men have known them. Yet despite his fiery trials, he was optimistic. Let, then, this triumphant language be ours. "I shall come forth as gold" is not the language of carnal boasting, but the confidence of one whose mind was stayed upon God. There will be no credit to our account—the glory will all belong to the divine Refiner (Jam 1:12).

For the present, there remain two things: *first*, love is the divine thermometer while we are in the crucible of testing—"And he shall sit [the patience of divine grace] as a refiner and purifier of silver…" (Mal 3:3). *Second*, the Lord Himself is with us in the fiery furnace, as He was with the three young Hebrews (Dan 3:25). For the future this is sure: the most wonderful thing in heaven will not be the golden street or the golden harps, but golden souls on which is

---

[12] **dispensations –** divine acts and dealings.
[13] **needs-be –** a necessary cause; the cause behind a resulting effect.
[14] **dross –** a scum formed from impurities on the surface of molten metal; thus, something worthless.

stamped the image of God—predestinated "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom 8:29)! Praise God for such a glorious prospect, such a victorious issue, such a marvelous goal!

From *Comfort for Christians*, available as a paperback from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

A.W. Pink (1886-1952): Pastor, itinerate Bible teacher, author of *Studies in the Scriptures* and many books; born in Nottingham, England, immigrated to the U.S., and later returned to his homeland in 1934.

Christian! Your present afflictions are not great if compared with the afflictions and torments of many of the damned, who, when they were in this world, never sinned at so high a rate as you have done! There are many now in hell who never sinned against such clear light as you have done, nor against such special love as you have done, nor against such precious mercies as you have done! Certainly, there are many now a-roaring in everlasting burnings who never sinned as you have done!

Whose pains are without intermission of mitigation;[15] who have weeping served for the first course, gnashing of teeth for the second course, the gnawing worm for the third course, and intolerable pain for the fourth course!

Yet the pain of the body is the least part of pain. The very soul of sorrow and pain is the soul's sorrow and pain! The everlasting alienation and separation from God is served for the fifth course!

Ah, Christian! How can you seriously think on these things and not lay your hand upon your mouth, even when you are under the greatest temporal[16] sufferings? Your sins have been far greater than many of those who are now in hell, and your "great" afflictions are *but a fleabite* compared to theirs! Therefore, hush your murmuring and be silent before the Lord!

—Thomas Brooks

---

[15] **mitigation** – the action of making something milder.

[16] **temporal** – of man's present life in time as distinguished from a future eternal existence.