

“The Providence of God”

My grandfather had a workshop in his basement. I remember him sitting in his chair, completing a project with meticulous concentration. Once he finished a project, he brought it upstairs to show to my grandmother.

The picture of a workshop illustrates the Christian life. The present life down here is a work in progress, putting to death the sinful flesh and putting on Christ. It aims for the goal of engraving of the Son of God on one's character, as Paul says, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.” The tools the Lord uses are tribulations.

Unfortunately, the common impression that the Christian life must be problem-free. It assumes that if anything stands against personal happiness, then it must be eliminated. But this problem-free Christianity rings hollow when tribulation comes. Instead, Christians need a faith grounded in God's Word, which along provides a backbone to stand firm.

God's Word reveals the foundation to face tribulations, which is God's providence. God has planned everything for His creation, and everything will come to pass as He purposed. This includes the various tribulations, as Jesus says, “In the world, you will have tribulation” (John 16:33).

His Word also provides instructions to stand firm. Practicing patience acknowledges in all times that nothing is by chance but by the hand of the loving Father. Giving thanks in all things turns one to the Giver of all good gifts. Holding firm to the gospel assures a Christian that God provides the final answer to tribulations, which is the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ demonstrates His love by suffering the full consequences of evil and pain. Thankfully, the story does not end with the cross. It is an empty cross. On the third day the Son of God defeated the power of death so that Christians can cling to His words, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25).

Because of God's providence, a Christian must flex his spiritual muscles, believing all of God's promises, unwavering from the path, and aiming for the glory set before him. As John Bunyan once wrote, “Hobgoblin nor foul fiend can daunt his spirit/He knows he at the end shall life inherit/Then fancies fly away, He'll fear not what men say/He'll labor night and day to be a pilgrim.” This present life is God's workshop as He engraves the character of His Son upon the Christian. He will bring it to completion in the kingdom come and showcase His glory to the world. Stand firm, Christian, in the providence of God.

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