

THE REFINING WORK OF THE SPIRIT

"HE shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they May offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:3). Jesus Christ is the Refiner and Purifier. He is the only One who can purify the heart and life — not our efforts nor good works. The Blood of Jesus is the purifier from committed sin and from inbred sin. And after the two works of grace (justification and sanctification) are wrought in the heart, the refining work of the Spirit continues as long as the child of God remains in the world. The Refiner, the Son of God sits upon the altar of the heart refining and purifying your life daily. "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Work of Purifying

The work of purifying is begun when the soul is born of God. He takes out the desire for sin, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." All hatred, envy, and deceit are destroyed when you become a child of God. There is an instantaneous change by the mighty power of God, which makes you "a new creature" in Christ Jesus.

Then He leads you on to the deeper work of purification, which is sanctification, that destroys and takes out of the heart the inherited sin nature, by the second application of the Blood of Jesus Christ. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Romans 6:6). "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12). He cleanses the soul from all unrighteousness, makes the heart 'perfect in love,' circumcises the heart "to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul" (Deuteronomy 30:6). Present your body "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1), and He will sanctify you wholly.

Daily Purifying

Then comes a daily purifying, through daily consecration and through patiently bearing the tests and trials permitted to come to you, offering your life a sacrifice to God daily; and it is a sacrifice, because more or less suffering comes into the life for Jesus' sake. While the joy surpasses all the suffering, yet you take upon you the reproach of the Gospel; and "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Unless you bear your cross, Jesus said, you "cannot be my disciple"; and that cross brings suffering on your part, to be His child. Many forget their covenant and go on in their self-will. This is the reason they do not grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, and soon lose the love of God out of their hearts and go back into sin.

It takes a daily consecration. Consecration makes room for the fullness of God by emptying out the heart. You are to keep surrendered, to keep your will in His hands and your life unspotted from the world, obeying every word that is in the Bible. And after all this is done, still the Refiner and Purifier sits as the Purifier of your heart and life. He leads you into the furnace as it pleases Him. He is refining you as gold is refined in the fire. He sits by the crucible. He will guard your soul more carefully than a father — yes. a thousand times more!

The Trial of Faith

God says. "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, ." (I Peter 1:7). He might have said that faith was more precious than gold, but He said, "the trial of your faith." Many are discouraged in time of trial, but you must hold the integrity of your heart, and God will increase your faith. Let Him try the reins of the heart, and let the purifying and purging go on.

There is a deep death to self, a deep consecration daily. How are you going to attain unto that death to self? God is giving you an opportunity every day, in the circumstances about you, to die to self; but the trouble is, there is something in your very nature that resists. That self-life does not want anything to come that hurts and causes a little suffering; but after all, had you not better bear a little and suffer a little, that you might be perfected in Him and become a vessel unto honor?

Paul the Apostle said, "I die daily"; "I press toward the mark"; "I keep under my body"; that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." If he had continually to strive and die to self to attain unto the First Resurrection, how much more must we strive to attain unto the Rapture of Jesus Christ!

"Meet for the Master's Use"

God is preparing you for greater service. If you make that deep consecration, the Spirit will mould and fashion your life, and make you an instrument in God's hands; and there is no joy on earth compared to that of being a soul winner, a vessel "meet for the master's use." Put yourself in God's hands. He cannot mould your life unless you let Him do so. If you lay your life at the foot of the Cross (and it means more than saying it — it cannot be said deeply enough), you will find what it means to be clay in the "potter's hand": and God will use you, and it will mean everything to you in this life, and in the life to come.

Every child of God can make that unreserved consecration. Throw yourself back into the arms of God, yield yourself to be an instrument in His hands. Circumstances and conditions may oppose you, and you may say, "I have failed God." It matters not what your failures have been; if you can get to the place where you wholly yield yourself to His will, with a true and honest heart, He will take your life and make you an instrument, and He will give you His best.

But if there is something of self to which you are clinging, or if you are surfeiting and gathering things to yourself and are cumbered, you will never be able to launch out in the ocean of God's love, and you will never be able to make the Rapture when Jesus comes.

Open your heart to God. If you have a sin covered and hidden away in your heart, and God is convicting you, do your first works over. Do not cover it up, but go down before Him in true repentance. Bare your breast to High Heaven, and ask God to cleanse every spot and make you His child. Let the Word come down and purify your soul and conscience, and purify that offering, that you may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Let the Spirit search your heart lest there be something that has never been cleansed away by the Blood. The Stream of Calvary will bring in that perfect, divine love, without which we are nothing.

It means so much to be bathed and submerged in the love of God and the unity of the Spirit; riot setting up your will and opinion above others, yet always obedient to the Word of God, letting no one separate you from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the most wonderful thing to have life eternal and walk this earth below. You can have it. God will put His own will and way in your heart, and you will stand as a living witness and monument to God in your home or wherever you are. People may rail on you and mistreat you, but they will have to say in the end that there is no flaw in this great salvation. A godly life commends itself to every man's conscience.

The Christian's Stand

It will mean an uncompromising, out-and-out stand for the truth, not striking hands with an enemy of the truth, not counting the Gospel of so little value as to compromise with people's opinions or with those of your own flesh, but having "clean hands, and a pure heart," willing to die for the truth.

When your heart is cleansed, God will lead you on to deeper depths and higher heights. He will pour out the Holy Ghost upon your life, and endue you with power from on High to be a witness for Him. He will make you as bold as a lion to tell the Story, and to bear the Living Water to some barren land. Oh, would you not rather have it than anything on earth!

It is a marvelous privilege to bear the Message to the lost. You can bear the Message of the Lord in your home and to the people you meet at the door. The power of God and the anointing that tells the Story of Jesus will radiate from your life. Your very countenance, your smile, your walk and conversation, will bear the Message of the Lord. Time is slipping fast into eternity. Would you not do anything to bring a soul to God?

It is wonderful to live so close to God that you can wake in the still hours of the night, and hear some Scripture or song just singing down in your heart, and praises going up to Him. At your work you can look up and catch some message from the Word, some verse of Scripture that will feed your soul. You draw your "food from afar."