



2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3 And 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. (Mal 3:2-3)

At the very moment we may believe we have heard and learned all of the glorious beauties of the works attributable to Christ, we turn the page of our Bible and discover yet another that may embrace an attribute we had not previously considered. It is this rich display of opulence in truth that makes the Scriptures such a joy to read and study.

Have you, Good Reader, ever experienced moments of trial and hurt even at times when you have felt that you have rendered your greatest service to God? Have you wondered why such trials come to you when you are putting forth your best foot to be faithful and loyal to your Lord? Do you most often blame all of your troubles as having the Dark Prince of the Air as their source? Though the source may be evil, God often turns that evil intent to the good of His precious children. He may use those hard trials sent by

the wicked one to purge out the dross and slag of the slightest impurity in His favored Child. Judas was a most wicked and evil schemer, but God turned his evil intent of betrayal to our good through the offering up of His dearly beloved and only begotten Son for our sins. The wickedness of the traitor, Judas, condemned him to an Eternity of Darkness (*He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.* John 13:30); the eyes of Judas never again witnessed the beauty of a Sunrise! But God turned the wicked intentions of Judas' heart, possessed of Satan, into a means of His grace in making a way for our Redemption through Christ. He allows trials in our lives to purify and sanctify our souls.

Christ is the Refiner of our souls. He refines the silver and separates its valuable essence from the dross and slag of its naturally formed state. His Word, being His own essence, is also a Refiner that purifies and cleanses as we study and learn from it.

"....*for he is like a refiner's fire.*" "*God is a consuming fire.*" (Hebrews 12:29) God burns and destroys those elements of our character that are not edifying, and purifies those qualities that remain. As a Refiner of Silver, Christ draws near the fire and sits as a Refiner intently watching the purifying of the silver as He holds it in the center of the flames. You may shrink back in fear that the silver will be destroyed, but Christ is an expert Refiner and He will only burn and cast away the dross. The purity of your heart will not be diminished but rather purified.

The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. (Psalms 12:6) Seven represents complete perfection. The Refiner sits patiently by the silver crucible as the silver is held in the fire. He observe the dross come to the surface – for no sin shall be concealed from His All-Knowing Eye. He carefully scoops the dross from the surfaced, casts it aside, and returns the silver to the fire. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain* (Eccl 12:1-2) When troubles seem to constantly multiply and return after storm upon rainy storm, it may be that Christ is purifying our souls thereby.

Having purified the silver seven times, it should be ready to remove from the fire. How shall the great Refiner (Christ) know when the refinement has been complete? When He is able to look at the surface reflection of the silver in the crucible and clearly see His own image. Does YOUR image reflect that refinement and likeness of Christ?

In what more ways is the Refiner like Christ? Silver is a precious metal. The Refiner separates the believer from the non-believer as the wheat from the tares. He also Refines and purifies the soul and character of the silver as Christ does His Elect.

The Refiner, in order to purify the silver, must use fire to burn and separate the undesirable elements that have been added to the silver through too much contact with the earth. So Christ separates the undesirable habits and sinful inclinations from His elect by means of pain, trial, and hurt; but He does so without hurting the silver (or pure qualities of character for which He refines).

The Refiner softens the metal through heat to make it become malleable and fluid. Christ softens the tissues of the heart to cause them to be formed into His image, and He makes our hearts fluid so that it can penetrate into every possible crack and crevice of

grace.

The product of refined silver has gained much value through the process of refinement. So does every soul refined by God assume a value which it never before contemplated in the eyes of God.

The expert Refiner will not leave the silver in the fire any longer than absolutely necessary to its refinement. Christ may send trials into our lives, but for no longer a time than is necessary to purify our hearts.

The quantity of silver refined at once is of a comparably small quantity. So the hearts refined by Christ are usually few in number for few will meet the standards of ore expected by the Refiner who is Christ. Has your heart been Refined by the Refiner, and has your luster and has your properties and nature changed in conformance with His?