

CHAPTER TWO

THE FATHER'S REFINING PROCESS FOR HIS CHILDREN

THE BUILDING OF "A DEEP AND UNSHAKABLE TRUST"

..."Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah. So the people grumbled at Moses saying "What shall we drink?" Then he cried out to the Lord and the Lord showed him a tree, and he threw it into the waters, and the waters became sweet. There He made from them a statute and regulation, and there he tested them. And He said, 'If you will give heed to the voice of the Lord your God, and keep all His statutes. I will put (literal Hebrew "permit") none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I the Lord am your healer.' Then they came to Elim where there were twelve springs of water and seventy date palms, and they camped there beside the waters"....

Exodus 15: 22-26

In these days every children of God must begin to seek a deeper revelation of the Father's method of bringing them into the fulness of their inheritance and calling in Christ Jesus. They need to gain this revelation in order that they might freely come to the place wherein they walk in the paths of righteousness AT ALL TIMES. As they begin to walk (abide) in righteousness - giving the Word of God priority in all things - the Body of Christ will start to awaken corporately. The Church will then be found walking in the fulness of the authority which belongs to Her in Christ, in Her remaining days in this dispensation. As we meditate on the portion of Scripture above we will learn many things about the necessity, as children of God, to keep our eyes "fixed" on the Word of God - again, AT ALL TIMES! It is of extreme importance for us to realize that the Father desires all things for our good, and as one truly enters into intimate fellowship with Him in the "inner chamber" THEN they shall come to see clearly that there is no need to be hesitant to walk in His commandments. It is only as we continually act in obedience to His commands that we will develop "a deep and unshakable trust" in Him in EVERY area of our lives - and this will truly enable (empower) us to love

our Heavenly Father whole-heartedly.

THE ONLY WAY THE FATHER COULD BLESS HIS PEOPLE WAS THROUGH THEIR OBEDIENCE

It was only three short days after the children of Israel had experienced the greatest manifestation of the delivering power of God Almighty (in being set free from under the bondage of Pharaoh and their miraculous deliverance in the crossing of the Red Sea) that their eyes turned back to themselves to such a degree that they "feared" that their needs would not be met in the wilderness. It was clear that their trust was not yet transferred to the One Who had freed them from their bondage and desired them to be His chosen people. The only way the Father could bless His people was through their obedience to the words He had spoken to Abraham and those that were spoken through Moses. We must realize that the first five books of the Bible were not written until later by Moses. From this we can see that it was imperative that they listen to Moses and the commands and instructions God gave to them through him. It was only in this way that God could gain their trust and respect - as He was "enabled" to show Himself strong on their behalf as they obeyed the words of the prophet. (2 Chronicles 20:20)

"GOD TESTED THE PEOPLE BY SPEAKING FORTH WORDS EXPRESSING HIS HEART'S DESIRE

In Exodus 15: 25b-26 the Word states:

...."There He made for them a statute and regulation and there He tested them and He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians for I the Lord am your healer"....

From this passage we see that God tested the people by speaking forth Words expressing His heart's desire for them to be obedient to Him in all things. Therefore, once His Word was spoken to them, they would have the clear choice of obeying it (which would bring blessing under the Covenant) or disobeying, (which would bring them out from under the Abrahamic Covenant) and subject them to attack by the Evil One (the curse), who was attempting to obliterate them

from the face of the earth. How clearly we must see that God is indeed "never changing", and today it is no different, in that the Father still desires simple obedience to His Word in ALL things. Of course we have a new and better Covenant ratified by the Blood of Jesus Christ - and a rich inheritance as joint-heirs with Him - but every aspect of the inheritance is put into effect by faith in - and obedience to - the Word of God, for "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God", and "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (Romans 10:17; 14:23)! In Exodus 15 we see that God had met the people's needs by His supernatural power and, after He had spoken to them, we see in verse 27, that He was pleased to move them on to the oasis. The Lord had spoken in verse 26 and it is obvious that, somewhere between that time and verse 27, God had told Moses which way to go, and when the people were obedient to Moses - who had been obedient to God - they were blessed by being led to that oasis.

THE "TRAP OF UNBELIEF"

In Exodus 16: 2-4 it is written:

..."And the whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the sons of Israel said to them, "would that we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold I will rain bread from Heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction"....

Exodus 16: 2-4

From this passage we see once again that the Israelites began to grumble as soon as the "physical circumstances" of their needs around them got out beyond their "own" understanding of how those needs would be met. Because of their desire to dwell on their own understanding they began to look at Moses and Aaron (flesh and blood) as the ones responsible for their "imagined" predicament. As soon as they took their eyes off God and His Word they forgot about Him and all He had done for them up to that point. We are able to learn a great lesson from our forefathers in that Christians today - in "allowing" themselves to keep their eyes fixed on their physical circumstances - continually fall prey to the same "trap of

unbelief" which awaits all those who put aside the Word of God to lean upon their own understanding, through fear. Many children of God are "well trained" to continually listen to - and act upon - the lies of the Evil One, when in reality we are called to listen at "all times" to the Spirit of God, and be obedient to Him in all that He instructs us to carry out.

Those children of God who, in some way, still desire to adhere more strongly to their own understanding - thus discerning all things in light of the "darkened knowledge" of this world rather than the Wisdom of God - will ALWAYS to that degree of their self-desire, walk in darkness. Because of these things, fellowship with the world instead of with God's Word (Will) seems natural to them. How important it is for us all to realize the danger of this folly! For ANY reliance AT ALL upon our own understanding shall always reap a form of corruption (darkness) in our lives - serving only to fuel any remaining "ground" of rebellion against the Heavenly Father, rather than to remove it. The Father sent His Word to restore fallen mankind to Himself - first through the Old Covenant prophet and then the Incarnate Word. He desired to separate His beloved creation from the sin and death which came into the earth when Adam fell in the Garden. As His people harkened in obedience to His Word their sins became exposed, and as they repented and remained in fellowship with Him, they came into a deeper and more intimate knowledge of the God they served. Believers must realize that they will either fellowship with the Father and His Word or with the "world" and its ways in whatever they do - every moment of every day! It is only when the children of God separate themselves unto Him in ALL that they do that there will no longer remain the "overpowering" desire within to sow to the flesh, rather than to the Spirit of God!

THE SPIRIT OF A MAN IS NO DIFFERENT (THAN THE BODY) AND A HEALTHY DIET OF THE WORD OF GOD IS REQUIRED "DAILY" TO KEEP IT STRONG AND ALLOW IT TO REMAIN IN ITS RIGHTFUL POSITION OF PREDOMINANCE OVER THE SOUL AND BODY"

In Exodus 16: 4 it is written:

...."Behold I will rain bread from Heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction"....

It is extremely important to note that the Word says "gather a day's portion every day". How important it is for believers to fellowship with the Father and His Word each day, and thus partake of the true spiritual food (the "bread of life") - knowing that in their daily portion is the life and power and grace to sustain them for that day. Too many Christians attempt to feed "irregularly" upon the Word of God and the effect of this is no different spiritually than it would be physically. We can easily understand, in the natural realm, what would happen if we were to eat one day, miss five, eat one day, miss three and so on. Eventually our body would not be able to function properly and we would be hindered greatly in our physical movements. The spirit of a man is no different and a healthy diet of the Word of God is required "daily" to keep it strong and allow it to remain in its rightful position of predominance over the soul and body (Matthew 4: 4).

"IT IS HIS MOST HOLY WILL THAT NOT EVEN ONE SOUL SHOULD PERISH"

Quite simply, the main reason why our Heavenly Father desires us to walk daily before Him in His Word is that He loves us greatly and desires for us to know Him intimately. He also knows what danger there is for those who "fellowship" with the "world. It is because of these things that He will do everything in His power to lead those in rebellion back onto the "narrow path" of His perfect will - for it is His most holy will that not even one soul should perish, but that all might step under the umbrella of the glorious salvation which He has provided for all of mankind in Christ! As the children of God begin to gather the spiritual food needed - day by day - their eyes will no longer dwell on the future or turn back to the past, for they will have come to learn to live in the "present" (which is where the Father would have them) and thus their eyes will remain fixed on Jesus (Hebrews 11: 1-2).

One important point that must be established as we continue on the topic of the Father's refining process for His children is that we, as God's children, need this process of refining and renewal in order to "continually" grow nearer to our Heavenly Father. We also need to realize that He gave us His Word - and the commandments of obedience found therein - so that we might continually measure our hearts by that Word. The Father's process of refining and testing was not formed in order for Him to know what was in our hearts - for He knows all things! It was for us, in order that we might be continually transformed, and renewed in our minds to the way that He sees and thinks. It is the deepest heart-desire of the

Father to separate us continually from sin - and indeed from every "environment" which is apart from Christ - in order that we might come to know Him "as He is".

"THE HEART-CRY OF THE FATHER"

In Psalm 81: 8-16 it is written:

... "Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you; O Israel if you would listen to Me! Let there be no strange god among you; nor shall you worship any foreign god. I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide and I will fill it. But My people did not listen to My voice; and Israel did not obey Me. So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, to walk in their own devices. Oh that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways I would quickly subdue their enemies, and turn My hand against their adversaries. Those who hate the Lord would pretend obedience to Him; and their time of punishment would be forever. But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat; and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you"....

In this passage we can clearly hear the "heart-cry" of the Heavenly Father calling out to His children to be obedient to His Word - in order that they might draw near to Him and fulfil His deepest heart-desire for pure fellowship with them ("Oh, that My people would listen to Me [and] ...walk in My ways"). This has been the heart-desire of the Father throughout the ages and was the very reason that He created Adam in the first place - that He might have someone who could fellowship with Him and understand Him at His level of understanding (1 Corinthians 2:16). Even when Adam fell through his rebellion, God still loved mankind so much that He immediately introduced His plan for redeeming His beloved creation from the grasp of the Evil One (Genesis 3:15), which was, of course, carried out by the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. The Father has given the Church (the Body of Christ) the power and authority to finish the job in the earth, His will being that not one soul should perish (2 Peter 3: 9), and that all should come to repentance and a living knowledge of the Truth. We, as children of God, must continually be filled to overflowing with "Light" in order that we might be pure vessels of enlightenment concerning the "fulness" of the glorious redemption and inheritance that the Father has provided "all mankind" with in Christ!

"WE ARE REFINED AS THE WORD OF GOD ENTERS OUR HEART"

In Psalm 66: 8-10 the Word of God states:

..."Bless our God, O peoples, and sound His praise abroad, who keeps us in life, (literal- puts our soul in life) and does not allow our feet to slip. For Thou hast tried us O God; Thou hast refined us as silver is refined"....

We know that in the refining of silver, as the fire or heat is applied to it, all the impurities (dross) are separated from the sought after substance. In our walk as Christians, we are refined as the Word of God (on which is the anointing of the Holy Spirit) enters into our heart. This explains why, sometimes, as the Word is heard - particularly in an area where sin has been retained wilfully - that believers will experience the convicting fire and light of the Holy Spirit, which can indeed make all discipline and reproof seem not to be joyful, but sorrowful (Hebrews 12:11)!

As believers become mature in the faith they will experience, and receive, a deeper revelation of why God is continually refining and testing our faith. It is the will of the Heavenly Father for ALL of His children to walk in the place of abiding in His Word in every circumstance, and it is precisely for this reason that the children of God, who are "seeking" spiritual growth, constantly find themselves in circumstances where they must clearly make the decision to rely on (trust in) the Word of God - or their own understanding. In the beginning of their walk, more often than not, God's children will cling to the "artificial security" of the world which was formed from their "old life" prior to being born again. But, as their minds are transformed and renewed (Romans 12: 1-2) by the Word of God, they will come to the realization that the Father is worthy to be trusted in EVERY circumstance - and through their continued obedience they will eventually reach the point where soul and body will have become trained to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:14) and thus, their "spontaneous reaction" will be to discern all that crosses their path by the Word of God - in and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"AS WE ARE FAITHFUL TO ENTER INTO INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM, DAY IN AND DAY OUT, THEN WE SHALL CONTINUALLY IMPART THE "ESSENCE" OF HIS CHARACTER"

In "allowing" His children to continually exercise their free will in every situation, the Heavenly Father is ensured that as His children come to see the folly of leaning upon their own understanding, they will come to Him and to His Word "voluntarily" - in love, without any "compulsion" on His part. Thus His children, as they seek Him in the "inner chamber" , will have His awesome love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5: 5b). This is a very important fact to realize for those who picture the Heavenly Father as an "authoritarian taskmaster", for nothing could be further from the truth! We, as His children, must speak the Truth (Word of God) in the face of "every lie" of the Evil One in order that any distortion or misrepresentation of the Lord Jesus Christ or the Heavenly Father might be exposed. As we are faithful to enter into intimate fellowship with Him - day in and day out - then we shall continually impart the "essence" of His character and, thus, the minds and hearts of all those who cross our path shall come to be renewed to the reality of the "tenderness and affection" that He has for His precious ones - and also to the fact that all of His instruction and reproof are for our good, that we may share His holiness (Hebrews 12:10). As we grow in the faith we will begin to see clearly that the various "testings" we are led into are not simply a struggle of hardship, but rather an opportunity to please our Heavenly Father by "trusting" Him (according to His Word) to bring us through ANY and EVERY circumstance - rather than us vainly relying on our five physical senses for discernment. It is only faith in His Word which delights and pleases the Father (Hebrews 11:6)!

THERE IS "NO GOOD THING" IN THE FLESH

Any earthly parent will freely admit that the time they are most pleased with their children is when they will act on their word - whether an instruction or command - without question, fully believing that what they said is true and for their best interests. How important it is for parents to be abiding in God's Word and operating solely in the Wisdom of God - that wisdom which is surely needed for them to fulfil their responsibility to God concerning their children.

In Deuteronomy 6: 5-7a it is written:

...."Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear (reverence)

Him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land"....

and again it is written in verses 16 and 17 of the same chapter,

...."in the wilderness he fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. Otherwise you may say in your heart "my power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth"....

From these two portions of God's Word we can again see clearly that our Heavenly Father is desirous of "our greatest good" in ALL things. First, by His Spirit, He desires to reveal the evil which is inherent within the fallen nature of man (the flesh) to the point where we will come to the "full realization" that indeed there is NO GOOD THING which proceeds from the flesh (Romans 7:18). It is from this point that we are able to develop spiritually at an accelerated pace - for in having the true knowledge that there is nothing good in the old nature, we will seek only to sow to the Spirit (Galatians 6: 7-8), reaping as our reward, the absolute life (zoe) of God in our lives to a continually greater degree. This experience of His superabundant life is what the Father intended for His children from the very beginning. The more we experience this blessed life the more we will seek it - and the more that we seek it, the more it will come into our experience (Matthew 7:7, Matthew 10:39).

Secondly, the Father places "tests" in our path with the full intention that, as we will rely on His Word rather than our own understanding, we will experience to a continually greater degree the fulness of the precious inheritance we have in Christ Jesus. By His doing we are in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:30) and we are joint-heirs with Him (Romans 8:17)! Thus our Heavenly Father desires all of His children to partake of the "good land" which He has provided in Christ, and of which the "promised land" (Canaan) talked of in the Old Testament is a type and symbol (Hebrews 10:1).

WE MUST IN NO WAY PRESUME....

The Word of God in Deuteronomy 8:17 speaks again of the need for us to come to the full realization that if we are any less than fully dependent upon the Father and His Word for ALL things we will eventually say in our hearts that it was "our" power and the strength of "our own hands" which have made us to

prosper - and this, of course, is a lie of great magnitude! For if the children of God are dependent on their own strength for any part of what they consider their "service" in the Lord, they are deceived, and will be used in some way by the Evil One to sow "seeds of death and darkness" wherever they go. We must in no way - as children of the Most High God - presume even for a moment that we, in ourselves, could be in any way a "help" to our Heavenly Father, apart from obedience to the Holy Spirit! We must also come to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that all that we would appropriate from Him must be done by the exercising of faith in His Word - for again it is only faith which pleases Him (Hebrews 11:6).

"THE REALITY OF TRUE FAITH HAS BEEN DILUTED AND DISTORTED"

We also must come to have a clear revelation of the fact that "whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14: 23b). For centuries, in the lives of Christians, the reality of true faith has been diluted and distorted to the point where many believers are exercising an "impure" faith! A "natural faith" which comes from an assurance in their "own" ability (of which we have none - spiritually speaking) rather than an absolute faith (trust) and assurance in the Word of God. Many have "allowed" themselves to be deceived into thinking that they are operating in faith or, just as bad, they have "allowed" themselves to be brought to the place where they really do not believe it is totally necessary to walk by faith in God's Word at ALL times. Either way, the day has come where all who would call themselves believers in Jesus Christ must seek to come into the knowledge of what "true" faith is, and the very first step for them to take is to make a "quality decision" to put the Word of God first in their lives (for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God), and THEN their eyes must continually be fixed on Jesus the author and developer of faith (Hebrews 12: 1- 2).

"CONTINUAL DEPENDENCE UPON THE WORD OF GOD BY BELIEVERS AT ALL TIMES WILL KEEP THEIR HEART OPEN TO INSTRUCTION FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT"

Continual dependence upon the Word of God by believers at all times will keep their heart open to instruction from the Holy Spirit, and it will also place them in a constant state of "true humility" (1 Peter 5: 5-7) before the Father - because their total trust and dependence will be placed firmly on the Word of God

rather than on their own understanding and abilities. Many believers feel (think) that they are able to discern the deepest thoughts and intentions of their heart but, in reality, it is ONLY the Word of God which can reveal the depths of their being, for it is written in Hebrews 4:12:

...."For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power - making it active, operative, energizing and effective; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and the immortal spirit, and of joints and marrow, that is, of the deepest parts of our nature, exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart"....

Hebrews 4:12 Amplified

"THE FATHER DESIRES FOR ALL OF US TO BE REFINED TO THE DEGREE THAT WE WILL TALK, ACT AND THINK JUST AS HE DOES"

It is as believers "fill" their hearts with the Word of God - by abiding in, and meditating on Him, each moment of every day - that John 15:7, which states:

...."If you abide in Me and My Words abide in you, ask whatever you wish (desire) and it shall be done for you"....

will become a living reality in their lives. The Father desires for all of us to be refined to the degree that we will talk, act and think just as He does. As this happens in our lives, we will indeed be entrusted with more and more of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and we will be effective tools for the Heavenly Father in the establishment of the Glorious Church - and His Kingdom.

Jesus said in John 14:12:

...."Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father"....

These words of our Lord are directed to the heart which is filled with the Word of God, and thus attuned to His way of thinking. As the children of God begin to reach this point of the "total saturation" of their spirits by the Word of God, they will continually seek to walk in the perfect will of the Father - and thus,

they will truly walk in a continually deeper measure of the command to "love the Lord thy God with all thine heart" (Luke 10:27).

THE FRUSTRATION OF "ATTEMPTING" TO LOVE GOD WITH ONE'S WHOLE HEART WHILE "MAINTAINING" THE DESIRE - THROUGH IGNORANCE OR REBELLION - TO BE INDEPENDENT OF HIM

Many children of God have "allowed themselves to be lured away from the proper feeding of God's Word into their heart, and thus they continually experience the frustration of attempting to love God with their whole heart, while at the same time there remains within them, to a degree, the desire to be independent from God - in order that they might still have some grip or control upon their own lives. It is only the living Word of God that can show us the deep - and sometimes hidden - seeds of rebellion which can lie within our hearts. Freedom from EVERY ground of fear and rebellion is precisely what the refining process of our Heavenly Father will accomplish in the hearts of those who truly love Him. As one diligently and faithfully pursues the fulness of the Father's will, all of the dross and impurity within them will be consumed and removed - enabling them to be the "pure channels" of His love, power and grace that they are called to be, in Christ. As one continually places themselves in obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit they will "refuse" to have anything in their lives which is not from God, for they will KNOW in their heart that anything which is not from God would only become a hindrance to their true heart's desire to be obedient to Him - and, therefore, pleasing to Him in ALL things.

THE DANGER OF "MAINTAINING" SIN IN THE FACE OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Many children of God refuse to believe that we can live a life of true holiness while still in this earth. This unbelief is caused by disobedience on their part - through the refusal to keep their eyes "fixed" on Jesus and, therefore, their tendency is always to keep their eyes fixed upon themselves. It can be stated that to the degree that God's children fix their attention upon Jesus (the Word of God), they will no longer "attend" to their own selfish desires - which proceed and initiate from the flesh. It can also be said that to the degree that they continue to lean upon their own darkened understanding, they will surely ignore and disregard their Covenant with God - which was ratified by the precious Blood of Jesus! This

is why - up until this time - there has been great turmoil and confusion in and amongst many children of God. All of us need to make a true and pure commitment to the Word of God in order that we might fulfil the perfect will of the Father - both individually and corporately - in the Body of Christ. This is a serious matter and must be handled with an urgency which can come only as we are in perfect "heart-agreement" with the Father in ALL things. The hour is late and the presence of the Holy Spirit is becoming greater in the earth with each passing day. The refining process has now graduated to a point where if the children of God steadfastly refuse to go on with the Lord - because of a wilful desire to retain any form of sin in their lives - they will no longer be able to "stand" in His "manifested presence", thus causing them to continually flee from Him - instead of run to Him - and the perfect place of refuge that He provides.

Let us hear the words of the Father:

..."Tell My people of the immense danger of retaining their sin in the face of the outpouring of My Holy Spirit. For if they have made a heart decision to do so then truly I say to you the ground they allow the Evil One to stand on will cause them to cower in the presence of My Spirit, and because of this they will run away from Me instead of to Me. They will feel accursed (conviction) in My presence and they will deny all that proceeds from Me, and Satan will appear successful in his deception of them temporarily (it can be changed). Even some of My children who had sought Me previously will be swayed because of their continual desire to discern all that passes by them with their five physical senses - rather than the faith which I so desire them to exercise. It is for this reason that I, through My bondservants and handmaidens, shall set forth great examples of "prosperity" in those lives which are based solely on My Word. For I say to you that those who have put My Word first in their lives shall discern all things correctly by My Spirit and will not be deceived in any way"....

Amen

"IT IS TIME"

It is time now for all believers, regardless of how far removed they feel from the "fulness" of their calling, to hearken unto the voice of the Lord wherever they are and separate themselves unto the Word of God. Our Heavenly Father is more than capable of restoring His children - in every way - to the path of perfect

obedience He has for their lives, regardless of any circumstance they might presently find themselves in. As the children of God return to the Word of their Heavenly Father and make that Word their sustenance for every facet of their lives, the reality of the "true Christian life" will become firmly impressed upon their hearts and there will no longer remain within them a desire to lean upon their own understanding. Once again we must establish the fact that the Father has continually made provision for the testing and refining of His people for the purpose of bringing them back to Himself of their own free will.

"WE MUST CONSTANTLY KEEP OURSELVES IMMERSED IN THE WORD OF GOD"

It is written in Job 23:10:

..."When He has tried me I shall come forth as gold"

This portion of scripture is indicative of the Father's perfect will for each of His children, and it is certain that as one empties themselves to be filled with the Holy Spirit, they will indeed "come forth as gold" in the sight of both God and man. The Father desires each one of His children to be pure vessels - through which He can pour forth His Spirit upon all flesh in this last hour (Acts 2:17); therefore, we must constantly keep ourselves "immersed" in the Word of God - in order that we might fulfill ALL that we were created to accomplish from before the foundation of the earth. Every child of God must come to "know" that the process of refining they are experiencing is for their greatest benefit - both now and throughout all eternity!

TRUE "SUFFERING" DEFINED

In Romans 5: 3-5 (Amplified Translation) the Word of God states:

..."Moreover let us also be full of joy now! Let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our * sufferings *

**** The suffering we are called to in this earth is to stand continually against all the things which we have been redeemed from. It is in no way associated with physical sickness or any other manifestation of the law of sin and death, but rather it is to continually release faith in the Word of God regardless of the***

pressure of the circumstances which surround us. As our minds become transformed and renewed to the Word of God, "suffering" will become what it was intended to be; the joyful opportunity to further establish the Kingdom of God in the earth rather than the sorrowful, painful concept "religion" has made it to be, through unbelief.

knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance and endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character - that is approved faith and tried integrity. And character of this sort produces the habit of joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation. Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us, for God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us"....

It is important for believers to be able to say along with the apostle Paul that they KNOW that "pressure and affliction and (seeming) hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance". As the children of God have these things revealed to them by the Holy Spirit, they will then begin to consider "every" circumstance of their walk in light of God's Word. To put it another way, they will have become trained to measure ALL things by the Word of God - and this is precisely what our Heavenly Father desires to accomplish in the "refining process" He brings His children through. The "unswerving endurance" which is produced in believers is the ability and empowerment, in Christ, which will enable one to keep their eyes perfectly fixed - at all times - on the narrow path of perfect obedience. This in turn will cause one to come to that place wherein they are found "abiding" in the perfect will of the Father for their lives - both individually and corporately - in the Body of Christ.

"WE OWE A GREAT DEAL TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF FAITH THAT HAVE PRECEDED US IN THE BODY OF CHRIST"

In the last century A.B. Simpson, addressing the "sin-consciousness" (which has remained in the church through unbelief in the power of the Blood of Jesus to cleanse us from "all" unrighteousness 1 John 1:9) wrote, by the Spirit of God

..."multitudes are kept from spiritual progress by cast-iron systems of doctrine which have, in their own darkened understanding, settled forever the fact that holiness is impossible in this present life, and that no mere man, since the Fall, is able to keep the commandments of God, but must daily break them in some way

in word or thought or deed. And then a row of human characters is set before us to prove to us the impossibility of sanctification, and to show the satisfying and humbling influence of human imperfection. Multitudes have made their minds up in advance that they can never have the fulness of Jesus beyond certain narrow limits, and, of course they cannot advance beyond their own standards - thinking the fulness of the inheritance unattainable. Now we quite agree with the statement that no "mere" man can be holy or blameless, but the Lord Jesus is no "mere" man, and when He owns and keeps the heart, it is a divine holiness and a divine keeping; and we do assert that what no mere man can do, the Living Christ can do, and does, for those who abide in Him. Let us always take the Divine measure no matter what man may think or say"....

We owe a great deal to the men and women of faith that have preceded us in the Body of Christ for they indeed endured the hardships, which came their way, as good soldiers of Christ; and at a time when it was not so "popular" to discuss and expound upon the "deeper" things of God, they put themselves in a position to hear from the Spirit of God and receive the true, or exact, knowledge from Him - which was, and still is, so urgently needed in the church today! It is our duty before the Father to put ourselves in that same position of hearing the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. We will then be able to build on those things which have been revealed to us by the former apostles and prophets, with the sole intention of bringing the fulness of God's plan of redemption to completion in the earth - through the edification of the members of the Body of Christ, bringing them into that perfect obedience and holiness which the Heavenly Father desires for all of His children.

BELIEVERS MUST COUNT EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE FAITH IN THE FATHER'S WORD AS A BLESSING OF GREAT MAGNITUDE

Many believers - up to this time - have not been able to comprehend the fulness of the inheritance which is theirs in Christ Jesus. As one begins to apply themselves to the Word of God diligently they will immediately begin to experience the life (love) and light of God flowing into every area of their lives - refining and purifying them; making them into vessels which are ready and fit for the Master's use (2 Timothy 2:21). Believers must count every opportunity to exercise faith in the Father's Word as a blessing of great magnitude - knowing that

regardless of the "seeming difficulty" of their circumstances - they will, by the exercising of their faith, draw ever closer to Him and partake of the intimate fellowship He so desires to have with each one of His beloved children.

In James 1:2-4 (Amplified Translation) it is written:

..."Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort, or fall into various temptations. Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience. But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be people perfectly and fully developed with no defect, lacking in nothing"....

As the children of God persevere in faith and continue to hold fast, without wavering, the confession of their hope - which is the revealed Word of God - they will indeed have that hope as the anchor of their souls (Hebrews 6:19). As this process of exercising faith continually in the Word of God is persevered in, their minds shall constantly be renewed to the deepest thoughts and intentions of the Father's heart and mind. Through this process they will be removed from the darkness of the old nature and they shall be brought into the light - as those having the mind of Christ - for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth (Ephesians 5:8-9).

"PERSEVERANCE"

"Perseverance" (endurance) is a key word in the life of every Christian. In each life which is wholly given to God there will come the time when that faithful one will be brought to the place where they must persevere in the will of the Father through their faith in His Word - and His Word alone! In the magnificent work that the Father is doing in this last hour there will be no way for those children of God who still desire to be guided by the five physical senses (sense knowledge) to hear the voice of the Spirit - and thus they will "allow" themselves to stray from the path of the Father's perfect will for their lives. In making themselves strangers to the Covenants of promise, they will leave themselves open to all manner of evil - which Satan is only too pleased to lay upon them. This is indeed a "serious matter" and all of us - regardless of where we are at this moment

- must begin to operate on, and persevere in, the absolute principles of faith and the Kingdom which are found in the Word of God.

"WE MUST ALL KEEP OURSELVES IN A POSITION TO HEAR THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THIS WILL MEAN PUTTING ASIDE ALL THOSE THINGS WHICH HAVE HINDERED OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER IN THE PAST"

Everything is at stake in this last hour. We are living at a time wherein the "spiritual confrontation" between the Body of Christ and Satan is moving out into the open - and his vile aim is to bring all believers to the place where they are out of his way! He will openly "steal, kill, or destroy" from them to the degree that they (the people of God) are outside of the Covenants of promise. It has been this way throughout the ages, but as it was said before, this whole spiritual battle is now moving into its final stages and every circumstance is of great importance. Each situation (circumstance) will be shown to be a manifestation of the Spirit of God or a manifestation of the "fallen nature" of man - which is the nature of Satan. As we prepare for this final onslaught we must all keep ourselves in a position to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, and this will mean putting aside ALL of those things which have hindered our relationship with the Father in the past. This will mean approaching Him in ALL things with pure hearts - hearts which are continually kept clean by the washing of water with the Word (Ephesians 5:26-27).

"AS BELIEVERS ARE REFINED AND PURIFIED THEY WILL LEARN TO WAIT UPON THE LORD IN ALL THINGS"

When children of God continue to persevere in faith their lives will become based solely on the "Rock of revealed knowledge". Even if it appears that all of Hell is "breaking loose" around them, their spontaneous reaction to any and every circumstance will be to say in their heart, "What does the Word of God say and how am I best able to put it into action in this situation?" As believers are refined and purified they will learn to wait upon the Lord in ALL things and, because of this, they will learn to hear the voice of the Spirit in every situation and circumstance. This shall cause them to remain in the will of the Father - regardless of the thick darkness (caused by unbelief), which will attempt to surround them at times. As we look closely at the lives of the great men and women of faith in the

Bible we see that God would always reveal His plan in part to them, thus giving them the Word and the vision (revelation) to stand on. He would do this in order to give these servants of His a "goal" to fix their faith upon continually. Many times the servants of God would take it upon themselves to try and attain to the goal which was set before them by the resources of their "own" mind - through "preconceived notions" and "mental ascensions". In their subsequent failures, they eventually learned to trust whole-heartedly in God - learning time after time the futility of sowing to the flesh (Galatians 6: 7-8)!

THE NARROW PATH OF PERFECT OBEDIENCE

As believers place themselves in the total care of their Heavenly Father - thus becoming fully dependent on His Word - circumstances will no longer affect them adversely and lure them off the narrow path of perfect obedience. One reason why this path is referred to as "narrow" is because there is only one thing asked, yet that one thing is all-encompassing (absolute). The Father commands perfect obedience from His children in ALL things, but lest this sound too harsh or difficult, He has also made every provision by His Word and His Spirit for all of us to fulfil His desire. When believers are called on to walk through circumstances which "seem" impossible to the five physical senses - over a longer period of time than usual - the continual exercising of faith in the face of tremendous "spiritual pressure" will cause the "dross" to surface and be dealt with.

"GOOD CONFESSION"

As they continually hold fast their confession and keep it in perfect agreement with the "revealed" Word of God, the very word and confession of faith spoken will cause the anointing of the Holy Spirit (which is on those words) to cause any unbelief to be consumed by the fire of His Spirit. At the same time it will cause faith, in the area they are confessing, to continually "rise up". This is why it is written, "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). Constant, continual confession of having received the petition sought after in prayer - in other words, continually calling those things which be not in the natural as though they already were - will bring one's actions (by the power and ordering of the Holy Spirit) into perfect alignment (corresponding action) with their "good confession" supernaturally in every way, and inevitably bring about the physical manifestation of the blessing in the natural realm.

** "good confession" - is simply the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ (the Word of God) in thought, word and deed, (in faith) at all times.*

The diligent carrying out of this process cannot fail to inherit the blessing - the keys being to hold fast the confession of faith, despite any "adverse circumstances" the Evil One attempts to create (to walk by faith and not by sight), and to bring EVERY thought captive to perfect obedience - the revealed knowledge of the Father's will (2 Corinthians 10:5). There are some who totally deny the importance of the words which come out of their mouths, but it will be seen in "every case" that they are those who have refused Jesus His rightful place as the High Priest of their confession (Hebrews 3:1), and as it is written in Matthew 12:26 (Amplified Translation):

...."But I tell you on the day of judgement men will have to give account for every idle, inoperative word they speak"....

An idle word, in this context, would be any word which does not cause faith to rise up in their heart or the hearts of those their words reach. If the words spoken proceed from the mind of man (the "flesh") they will reap corruption and darkness, but if the words spoken are in accordance with the revealed knowledge of God's Word they will produce faith and life to all who will come in contact with them - thus establishing continually the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1-2).

"AS WE ARE REFINED AND PURIFIED OUR DESIRE TO STAND ON THE WORD OF GOD WILL OVERRIDE ANY FORMER DESIRE TO GRATIFY THE FLESH"

There are certain times when we, as believers, are standing against the forces of evil (either through intercession for others or to obtain those things which we need to carry out the perfect will of the Father for our lives and ministries), and what seems like insurmountable pressure rises up against us. As we are refined and purified, our desire to stand on the Word of God will "override" any former desire to gratify the flesh - any effort to shed the "pressure" that comes when we stand against the "currents of unbelief" that Satan attempts to overwhelm us with. We must ALWAYS have more faith in the Father's faithfulness - and the fact that He is watching over His Word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12) - than we

have any desire to lean upon our own understanding. For if we lean upon our own understanding in any way we will fail in the "eternal scheme of things" - even though it may "appear" for a time that we are successful.

"WE ARE CONTINUALLY BEING PREPARED FOR GREATER SERVICE"

As the Heavenly Father burns away the "dross" in us we must come to know that we are continually being prepared for greater service. The Father seeks those who are willing to do ALL of His will at ALL times, that they might lead His people into the fulness of everything He has for them in Christ. He needs those who - ABOVE ALL ELSE - will lay down their "own" lives to follow Him and be obedient to His Spirit. If there is any part of our heart in which a seed of stubbornness or rebellion remains, it will be exposed when we are put to the test, for our heart will fail if its "affections" have been placed on the things of the natural realm (self-desire) rather than the Word of God. As we see the "folly" of this misplaced trust and affection, we will repent and revert back to God's Word, and thus there will be an opportunity to once again prove ourselves in the area in which we had just experienced failure. The only danger we face is the hardening of our hearts against our Heavenly Father and His Word!

"THOSE WHO ARE PURE IN HEART WILL ALWAYS REPENT"

If we "allow" our heart to become hardened toward God we surely open the door to the Evil One to deceive us into remaining dependent upon our own strength - and thus, great spiritual darkness will ensue! It is the desire of the Evil One to bring us all to the point of confusion concerning the Father's will and then to lure us - by an act of our own will in agreement with his lies - outside the protective hedge of our Covenant with Almighty God. He will then strike us to the degree that we have "allowed ourselves" to be struck! It is a far better thing to keep our hearts soft and pure before the Father than to allow ourselves to slip out into the "outer darkness" of this world and its ways. Those who are pure in heart will always repent the moment they come to the realization in their heart that they have left the narrow path of perfect obedience set out for them by the Heavenly Father, whereas those of God's children who have a tendency towards rebelliousness will, at times, become bitter towards (have a controversy with) the Father and thus refuse to hold fast to the Word of God in their lives in a spirit of

self-exaltation. This is a very, very dangerous practice in this last of the last hour in light of the fact that the Father is coming to judge ALL rebellion in the midst of His household!

EXPOSING THE SPIRIT OF UNFORGIVENESS AND THE SPIRIT OF ENVY

... "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"....

Matthew 5:44

Those who steadfastly refuse to believe - and act upon - this command will always be "used" by the Evil One to carry out his divisive schemes in the midst of God's people (2 Timothy 2:26). Two of the most common "spirits", used by the Evil One to generate strife, are envy and unforgiveness, and they are defined as follows:

"the spirit of unforgiveness" - causes a desire in the believer to avenge or take satisfaction for an injury, or wrong suffered, by just punishment through retaliation.

"the spirit of envy" - causes a feeling of uneasiness at another's superior advantages or privileges, a dislike or discontent because of the superior excellence or success of another person. The root is based on a fear in the believer of someone getting ahead of them in the affections and love of the Heavenly Father or the brethren. Fleshly anger and jealousy are definite manifestations of this spirit.

There is one perfect defense against both of these spirits and that is for God's children to walk in the power of the Cross - continually choosing to "endure", in an absolute faith working through a perfect love, whatever manifestation comes their way - thus refusing to violate the law of love at "all cost" to themselves. As believers speak and act in the power of the Cross the plans of the Evil One will continually be thrown into disarray and the Father will be glorified - and His presence manifested - as one walks in perfect obedience to the command to love one another (1 John 3:23). As more and more believers have the command to love their brothers and sisters - "as themselves" - revealed to their heart by the Holy Spirit (Mark 12: 30-31), strife and jealousy will cease to exist in

the midst of all those who are truly seeking God. It is certain that all believers who separate themselves unto God in this last hour (for the purpose of going on with Him) will be dealt with immediately in this area of walking in love. For there is NO place for unforgiveness and envy within the Body of Christ!

"THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE"

It is written in 1 John 4:18:

...."There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear"....

It is time for fear to be removed ENTIRELY from the midst of God's children - for our Heavenly Father did not give to us a spirit of fear, but rather a Spirit of power, and of love, and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7)! As believers are baptized in - and consumed by - the Holy Spirit day in and day out, all fear will be removed from their lives - thus depriving Satan of any ground he had once used to create division and strife within the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"AS BELIEVERS WILL CONTINUALLY VIEW THEIR OWN HEART AND THEIR OWN WALK IN LIGHT OF THE WORD OF GOD, THEY WILL NEITHER HAVE THE TIME, NOR THE INCLINATION, TO JUDGE THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS FALSELY"

In Galatians 6:4 (Amplified) the Word of God states:

...."But let every person carefully scrutinize and examine and test his own conduct and his own work. He can then have the personal satisfaction and joy of doing something commendable in itself alone without resorting to boastful comparison with his neighbour"....

As believers will continually view their own heart and their own walk in light of the Word of God, they will neither have the time, nor the inclination, to judge their brothers and sisters falsely. We are called to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and developer (perfecter) of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-2), and to incline our ear to the Word of God (Proverbs 4: 20-27). As the energies of believers are wholly directed towards perfect obedience, they will find that they will be kept busy enough learning of the fulness of the precious inheritance they

have in Christ Jesus, and being prepared as pure vessels to fulfil every task they are given by the Lord. There should never be "any" manifestation of strife or jealousy amongst believers for these things are "sensual" and "demonic" (James), and are an abomination in the sight of the Father! They will SURELY be removed as this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit continues to increase in the earth!

We are now in the beginning stages of the greatest revival (harvest) this earth has ever seen - and judgement has indeed begun with the household of God (1 Peter 4:17).

It is written in Malachi 3:18-4:1:

..."So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him. For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evil doer will be chaff and the day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the Lord of Hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch"....

Now is the time for all true believers to separate themselves unto the Father on His terms - in order that they may be refined and purified by His Word and His Spirit. The hour is late - and whoever is not truly for Jesus shall be found to be against Him (Matthew 12:30)! Let every child of God put aside their desire to serve themselves and give their lives "wholly" to their beloved Creator!

In closing I would ask all believers to read and meditate the following portions of Scripture and apply it to every detail of their lives - in order that they might come to a deep revelation that we must all be found doing NOTHING apart from Christ.

..."According to the grace of God which was given me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire"....

1 Corinthians 3: 10-15

..."Except the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it; except the Lord keeps the city, the watchman wakes but in vain"....

Psalm 127:1 Amplified