

The King's Highway

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"BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART"

A pagan philosopher once said: "Call no man happy until he dies." By that he meant that happiness was impossible until man was done with things. To him happiness was to be had only in the calmness of a corpse, and in the rest of the grave.

But the greatest Teacher who ever lived gives us an insight into Truth in His words: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8.

Between the pagan with his false philosophy, and the Master with abundant provision for happiness here and hereafter, stands a great multitude, represented by the one who said:

"If you can get purity, then you can reap your harvests in mid-winter, and you can bask in the sunlight when the sky is dark, and your fireside shall glow in grateful contentment when there is no fire behind the bars."

It is amazing, in the words of John MacNeil, how frightened some people are of being perfect! It were well if they were equally afraid of being imperfect; for it is imperfection that grieves God. This dread of perfection has been called by some one, "a scarecrow set up by the devil to frighten away God's people from the very finest of the wheat."

One of these misguided ones wrote, in a satirical vein:

"We have had enough of these tin soldier saints, these dim dictum saints, these glass case saints, these private monopoly saints, who think that God has nothing to do but preserve them unto His heavenly kingdom. Let us have a few plain, ordinary town saints; a few secularized saints; an order of priests who are priests indeed; a generation of Christians who are not too holy to be useful."

But if we consider what Christ taught in continuing His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:13-17), His aim is to make useful saints. Any idea of sanctity that makes it useless is a misconception. Holiness makes for citizenship, instead of destroying it. Holiness, which is synonymous with a state of heart purity, is Christlikeness; and who would dare say that such a characteristic disbars one from effective citizenship?

There need be no equivocation about the term "pure in heart." The best authorities make the term "pure" to mean clean or clear. In ten of the twenty-eight times it is used in the New Testament it is translated "clean;" and in three of them (I Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:22, and 1 Peter 1:22) it is associated with the "heart."

This purification is through the elimination of that which defiles. There is no covering up of the defilement and allowing it to remain, and calling the things so treated "clean." When the lepers were cleansed their leprosy was not merely covered and concealed, it was

actually cleansed from their system. Well did Sheridan Baker express it:

"The Atonement provides for such a union with Christ that His life and purity shall flow through the believer, expelling all impurity and death, and assimilating him to the likeness and nature of Christ as the branch is assimilated to the likeness and nature of the vine. This is the Saviour's own figure."

The "heart" is set forth as cleansed because it is the center of our spiritual being, and out of it are the issues of life. It is that inward part of man that comprehends the mind and soul with all their faculties and affections, motives, inclinations, desires and purposes. It is the central spring of all human acts and words. And if the source of life be pure, we know that all the results will be pure, just as truly as a reservoir of pure water will supply pure water to all those who draw

"Inwardness is a distinctive feature of the Spirit," wrote Samuel Chadwick, in "The Way to Pentecost." Said he, further, "The Spirit works from within." That ought to challenge us in this time when so much stress is being put on externals and outward cleansing. Man stresses clean hands, clean speech, and a clean

outward appearance. But God looks on the heart! One may be externally correct and possess a polluted heart. Therefore, God considers the state of the heart as of supreme importance. A man may be better than his creed, but he cannot be better than his heart.

There need be no confusion about this purity of heart which the Master pronounced blessed. Indeed, its scriptural significance, as related to the moral nature, is "freedom from the taint or corruption of sinfulness, which is regarded as spiritual uncleanness or as a morally diseased condition. Purity, like holiness, is spiritual cleanness, moral soundness." (Dungan).

To quote Sheridan Baker again: "It is simple deliverance from spiritual disease, and impartation of the fulness of spiritual life." This purity, then, means freedom from mixture and freedom from pollution and defilement. Much may be said about entire devotion to God while little is said about a clean heart. But God cannot be properly enthroned until all sin and self are dethroned. To enthrone Christ, man must renounce his right to himself and yield to Christ in an utter abandonment to His whole will.

To carry the thought a little further, heart purity includes the two-fold idea of the rectitude of the mind, which causes the judgment to treasure and prize holiness; and the conformity of the will, wherein the affection and will embrace God's whole will. Man not only admires and approves holiness, but he wills to be holy; and through the indwelling and cleansing power of the Spirit, he demonstrates this will in his daily life.

There can be no happiness with sin in the heart. It is sin which separated man from

God and blinded him to the Truth. So when the heart is fully opened to Christ "He comes on a sin-killing errand, accompanied by the twin angels of Purity and Happiness."

The announcement made to Mary concerning Jesus before His birth, was: "He shall save His people from their sin."

When Christ was born, the angels sang for joy, and they announced: "Unto you is born this day a Saviour."

When John the Baptist heralded Christ's ministry his words were: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

In his First Epistle, John the Beloved, wrote: "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8).

When sin is dealt with in God's appointed way, the soul will properly reflect Christ. Such is impossible with the impurities, pollutions and obstructions of sin in the heart. Just as the reflecting pool is of value only when it is freed from all pollution, scum, and trash, so are the heart and life able to reflect Christ only when pure.

Many have sought to obtain this blessed state by the forced and mechanical purity of asceticism, but they have miserably failed. The purity which God desires is that which prepares and equips one not only to see Him in Nature and its beauties, in providences and their messages, in mysteries which are divinely revealed and in His Word; but to behold Him with the purified vision, which has no place for anything contrary to His nature and His will.

This blessed experience is not to thrill the soul with ecstasies which are to be selfishly consumed in personal enjoyments. It is for the purpose of preparing man to cheerfully devote Himself to doing all the will of God from a heart of love. And when there is no sin in the heart there is an inward satisfaction, a sweet delight and pleasure in doing His will. The purified soul enjoys the will of God, instead of enduring it.

This purity of heart is blessed because it prepares one to move wholesomely and healthfully among his needy fellow men, doing good wherever the opportunity is found.

This heart purity is blessed because it enables man to find purity everywhere, for "Unto the pure all things are pure." That is, the pure in heart seek for pure motives, instead of impugning the motives of any one.

With impurity in the heart, God is not seen, for the defiled soul is hesitant to look upon Him who is pure; for His holiness condemns the impurity in the soul. But the pure in heart welcome the sight of God, they crave fellowship and communion with Him. It is the perfection of the happiness of the pure in heart to see and commune with Him who is their all and in all.

There is a present, as well as a future, (Continued on Page 5)