

Heart Purity A Present Attainment

By E. W. Lawrence, London, England

Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean . . . I will; be thou clean (Matt. 8:2-3); A clean heart, O God . . . (Psalms 51:10); The blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7).

The human heart, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, can be entirely delivered from inbred sin as well as freed from actual sinning. Heart purity is attainable now. To be enabled to obey our Lord's word and "Go, and sin no more," the heart, that centre of our life and affections, that cistern from whence flows the influence of our lives, must be delivered from the thralldom of sin.

Outward sinning may be depicted as illness, but indwelling sin is typified as leprosy—a disease, malignant, cancerous, loathsome, and vile!

There is a judicial cleansing of the heart, or a freeing from the guilt of sinning, and thus it is made "as white as snow," which God grants at the moment of regeneration. But a "bent to sinning," or an "infection of nature," still remains within the converted soul. While it does not manifest its presence at first, the new convert later feels the throbbing of the old nature within. Paul terms this warfare the lusting of the flesh against the Spirit.

Thus Maynard G. James, in a testimony given many years ago, writes: "It was not long before the Holy Spirit convicted me of my own need of this experience [the blessing of 'perfect love']. Although unmistakably conscious that my sins were forgiven, and that I was accepted of God through Christ Jesus, I soon realized that the old evil nature, with which I was born still remained in me . . . I found to my sorrow that a civil war was being waged within my soul . . . At times carnal fear paralyzed my efforts to witness for Christ . . . I found the uprisings of anger, irritability and worldly desires seeking to quench the love of God in my soul. There was the sad consciousness of a strange want of power and joy in my service for Christ . . . The early joys of conversion had subsided . . ."

It is the Spirit's work to convince of the presence of depravity, and to show the deep, dark, and secret chambers, "where polluted things hold empire o'er my soul."

To the disciples in the Upper Room, gathered there in obedience to their Lord's command, "Tarry ye . . . until," there came a vision of the holiness of God. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"—and in contrast to the holiness and majesty of the Lord they placed their own sin-depraved hearts. The experience of the Old Testament prophet found new meaning, "Woe is me! . . . mine eyes have seen the Lord . . ." The song writer put it like this:

Tell me what to do to be pure
In the sight of the all-seeing eyes!
Tell me, is there no thorough cure,
No escape from the sin I despise?
Tell me, can I never be free
From this dreadful bondage within?
Is there no deliverance for me?
Must I always have sin dwell within?

Must I? Or is heart purity attainable and receivable in this present life? The Scriptures declare this to be a glorious possibility, for

the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Yet many believers deny this possibility. All they promise is a lingering death of the carnal nature; and even so, that real deliverance does not belong to this world, but is ours "after death." Thus they make death a greater saviour than Christ! Even the Keswick Convention teachers speak of Christ as counteracting the sinful nature, or suppressing its powers. Says the Word, "The body of sin may be done away."

As Benhadad, King of Syria, the sin-axis pleads for life:

Nearer, my sin, to thee, nearer to thee,
E'en though it be the church
That teacheth thee . . .

George Fox, founder of the Quakers, said a company of these people came to him while he was imprisoned in 1650. ". . . divers professors came to discourse with me, and I had a sense, before they came, that they came to plead for sin and imperfection . . . They could not endure to hear of purity and of victory over sin and the devil; for they said they could not be free from sin on this side of the grave. . . . At another time a company of professors came, and they began to plead for sin . . . They could not abide to hear of being made pure here."

The body's organs are jealous of purity. That is why the blood flows continuously through your veins, to cleanse the body from defilement. How much more in the spiritual realm! The Spirit leads a believer to "pant" after purity. G. K. Chesterton, a novelist, gave the following as his reason for joining the Roman communion: ". . . to get rid of my sins. . . There is no other religious body [? ? ?—E. W. L.] that does really profess to get rid of people's sins."

Heart purity is attainable now. The Blood cleanses from all sin, and the "body of sin may be done away." Dr. Daniel Steele said of the Greek aorist tense in Romans 6:6: "The aorist tense here teaches the possibility of an instantaneous death stroke to inbred sin, and there is no need of a slow and painful process lingering till physical death or purgatorial fire ends the torment." And when the Blood has cleansed from all sin, the Blood keeps on cleansing, "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light," and "go, and sin no more."—Herald of Holiness.

FACING ETERNITY

Some years ago, in Alberta, Canada, a young explorer was found dead in a lonely hut. He had been searching for gold, and had been caught without food, without friend, without help, by the winter blizzards, and had frozen to death! Just before his death, he had written this letter: "The sun is shining, Mother, but I feel so cold. I can still walk a little but that is about all. I have not eaten for a long time. I have not seen a human being for forty days. There are magazines here, but the stories are so silly. I have some cards, but I don't care to play with them now. The only thing I can think about is my sins. I wonder if God will forgive my sins!" The letter ended there. When he was about to face God, gold meant nothing to him. The only thing that mattered was God's forgiveness and his soul's salvation. The Lord Jesus said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"—Selected.

Saved by a Hymn

In a little Canadian town back in Ontario, 64 years ago, one evening in January I came upon a crowd of people gathered at a street corner. A woman was singing a song. It was brand new to me, for I knew nothing of hymns, church, or Sunday School. Religious life was a long way from my thoughts. The hymn she sang was old to the church:

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

After each verse she had a refrain:

O Calvary! dark Calvary!
Speak to some heart from Calvary.

As she stood there singing, with her face turned up to heaven, the Holy Spirit made Calvary a reality to me. It was there I got my soul's first vision of the Saviour dying in my room and in my stead. My conversion was rather unusual. I knew no theology. I had no spiritual adviser. Possibly that is why I got on so well.

I have learned since that night that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring the soul to God and make Christ real. It is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." This was surely true in my case. I would not have said that night that I was "saved" or "born again," for I had never heard those expressions. But later, when I began to read my Bible and found those terms, I felt, "Why, they express my experience. I was surely 'born again' as I stood before the Cross of Christ." As one of the old hymn writers has expressed it:

My conscience felt and owned its guilt
And plunged me in despair,
I saw my sins His blood had spilt
And helped to nail Him there.

FAITH AND FACT

When I went to my home that night, I found myself doing a strange thing, something I had never done in my life before. When I was ready for rest, I knelt down beside the bed to pray. And then I got the first thrill of Christian experience, for I found myself intuitively addressing God as "my dear Heavenly Father." For 64 years I have thus been addressing Him, and He has been more than a Father to me.

I have always thanked God for a faithful Christian layman who met me the following day, and opened the New Testament to the Gospel of John, and read to me very carefully the twenty-fourth verse of the fifth chapter: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

He asked me to read that verse, and as I finished he would say, "Isn't it wonderful?" But I did not fully grasp the meaning at the moment, and he requested that I should read it again. Then he asked, "Do you know who is speaking?" I said "No." He replied "Why, it is Jesus, and He is saying these wonderful words to you." Again he had me read the verse, and then he asked, "What does He say that you have?" I replied, "Why, He says I have everlasting life." Then he asked, "Now,

(Continued on Page 8)