

Purified

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Holiness has very wide implications, as we find out in our progress in the Christian life. If I were asked whether sanctification were a crisis or a process, I should say without hesitation, that it is both. The crisis takes place when the heart is purified by faith and, at the same time, one is filled with the Spirit. Then there follows the process in which, no hindrance being any longer within, God can by the indwelling Spirit perfect us in holiness. To be purified tells of a definite experience in answer to the prayer of Psalm li. 10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." A dictionary definition of the verb "to purify" is "to cleanse from foreign or hurtful matter, to set free from defilement." This is just what takes place when one is purified.

Before the experience of the new birth takes place there is nothing good in us from God's point of view, though from the worldly point of view there may be a good deal. The apostle said, "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing." When we are born again, an altogether new element is introduced into our being—eternal life, a part of the Divine Nature. But until we are purified there are

two elements fighting within us,

sometimes one being on top and sometimes the other. There is the spiritual and the carnal, the heavenly and the earthly, the life of the old man and the life of the new man.

A Christian native who had not long been converted came to a missionary and said that before he became a Christian there was one Indian in him and he was a bad one. Now, he said, there were two Indians, a good one and a bad one. Could he have deliverance from the bad Indian? Thank God, the experience of heart cleansing sets us free from the bad one. What a deliverance it is!

"Oh, wonderful cleansing that Jesus gives to me."

Heart cleansing is a definite crisis. Let no one ever persuade you that there is no such thing as a definite experience of sanctification in which a twofold work of grace is done, the heart being made pure and the soul being filled with the Spirit. There is a line of teaching which keeps you out of blessing by asserting that you have it already. This is, of course, true in one sense for He "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph i. 3). Take, for example, what happens when someone dies and leaves you an inheritance. It is yours potentially right away, but there are certain legal processes to be gone through before it can be yours in actual possession.

There are a few persons, a very few, who go straight into the life of sanctification from the very start of the new life. As a rule however, there is an interval (though it need not have been so long) between the exodus from Egypt and the entry into Canaan, that wonderful object lesson of the sanctified life.

Many of God's children can testify to a very definite crisis in their own experience. The writer, too, would humbly say that

twelve years after his conversion,

having earnestly and desperately sought this blessing, when by simple faith he accepted purity of heart and the filling of the Spirit, for him it was a far more definite experience than when he was born again.

The Children of Israel were a long time getting to the border of the Promised Land, but it did not take them long to get over it, and when they had crossed over they knew that they had. If we are wise we shall face up squarely to this question—Have I, or have I not, been purified?

What is it that is purified? It is the heart? As the heart is the most important organ of the body, so is the heart also the most important part of the spiritual life. "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. iv., 23).

In Acts xv. 8, 9, we read, "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, . . . purifying their hearts by faith." The purifying of the heart and the gift of spiritual fulness are joined together in the economy of God and are joined together in experience also.

Many New Testament truths are graphically illustrated in the Old Testament. The well-known passage in 2 Kings ii. 19-20, where Elisha healed the polluted waters of a stream, certainly illustrates God's way of securing heart purity. The prophet did not pour a lot of pure water into the stream, but went to the spring out of which the waters flowed, and cast salt in there, with the result that no more impure water flowed out. That is how God works. He deals with the spring and centre of life—the heart—and makes that pure. In Titus ii. 14, we are told that Christ "gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify (us) unto himself." The purpose of the Cross was not forgiveness alone but also purity. Pardon is one thing, purity is something more.

How does this come about? How are we saved? We are "saved through faith" (Eph. ii. 8).

How are we sanctified?

We are "sanctified by faith" (Acts xxvi. 18).

"Holiness by faith in Jesus.

Not by effort of thine own

Sin's dominion crushed and broken

By the power of grace alone."

The writer tried fasting, praying far into the night, giving away his money, tried everything except simply trusting the Lord to give what He had promised. When that step was taken there was no thrilling experience, but a wonderful sense of rest; and while one has ever since been very needy and far from perfect, yet, life and service have been altogether different.

THE BUSY MAN

If you want to get a favor done by some obliging friend, and want a promise safe and sure, on which you can depend, don't go to him who always has much leisure time to plan; but if you want your favor done—ask the busy man.

The man with leisure never has a moment he can spare. He's always "putting off" until his friends are in despair. But he whose every waking hour is crowded full of work forgets the art of wasting time—he cannot stop to shirk.

So when you want a favor done, and want it right away, go to the man who constantly works sixteen hours a day. He'll find a moment sure, somewhere, that has no other use, and help you, while the idle man is framing an excuse.

He brought

His Father's Prayers!

By R. W. Hornsey

"We will begin as we intend to continue," said Mrs. Thompson, before she went downstairs the first morning after the honeymoon: and so she went into the kitchen and told the maid that when breakfast was over they would have prayers, and would expect her to join them. "But I'm not religious," said the girl. "I haven't been to Church for years." "Well, come for a week, anyway, won't you?" said Mrs. Thompson, and the maid came. After Mr. Thompson had read a chapter, he prayed just such a prayer as he had heard from his father's lips a thousand times. On the third morning when he had gone to business, the maid asked, "Who's sick?" "I don't know that anybody is," said Mrs. Thompson, "Why do you ask?" "Because the master's prayed for three days for the sick and afflicted. I wondered who it was, and as this is my afternoon off, I thought I'd take a jar of jelly round." She never suspected, of course, that it was just a prayer, with nobody particular in mind! When Mr. Thompson came in at noon, his wife said, "Who is sick?" "I don't know. Why?" he asked. "Kate wanted to know who you were praying for this morning," she answered. "It's her afternoon off, and she wants to take some jelly to the sick, whoever it is." Mr. Thompson meditated, and then said: "Now I come to think of it, one of our workmen is off with a broken leg: and if I'm going to maintain my credit with Kate, I reckon I'll have to do something besides praying for the sick. I'll call on my way back to business."

Kate unknowingly taught Mr. Thompson a great truth, that sometimes our prayers are of little worth, unless we transform them into realities by our deeds. Like the little girl who one day had been praying that God should make her daddy, who was ill, well again. When she got up from her knees, she said to her mother, "Don't you think it would help Daddy to get better if I was to take some pennies out of my money-box and buy him some Oxo's?" She realised that often we have to play a part in answering our own prayers. In fact there is no doubt that many of our prayers will never receive a satisfactory answer if we merely pray and leave the rest to God.

I remember reading of a tramp who was given a meal on condition that he cleaned out the gutters and spouts of a certain house. When he had partaken of the meal, he was given a trowel and a ladder. "What are these for?" the tramp enquired. He was informed that they were for his use, in doing the cleaning out. "These are no use to me," said the tramp, "my method is to pray for rain." But God does not encourage laziness, and will not do for us what we are well able to do for ourselves.

The celebrated preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, was invited by a Welsh farmer, in accordance with a local custom, to visit his fields and pray for God's blessing upon the potential crops. But the great preacher knew something about agriculture, and when he saw the land, he refused to offer the desired prayer. He told the farmer, that what was needed was not prayer, but manure, which the farmer had evidently neglected to supply. It is a good and

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