

The
William Booth
Collection

PURITY OF HEART

Chapter 3 – PURITY MEANS DELIVERANCE

Luke 1:74-75 – *He would grant unto us, that we ... might serve Him without fears in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.*

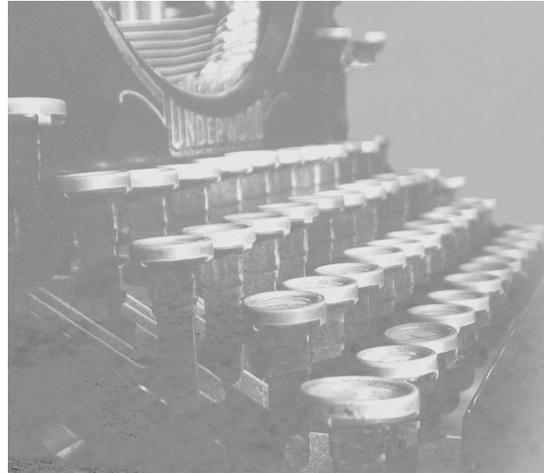
My Dear Comrades, I hope that I shall not weary you by returning again to the question of "A Pure Heart." The subject is so important to the whole Christian Church, to the entire Salvation Army, nay, to the wide, wide world, that it must be lifted up. Holiness has been so great a blessing to us in the past, and will, I am sure, be so much greater a blessing to us in the future, that I feel that it must be brought to the front.

You must see its value, and understand its meaning. If you are not living in the enjoyment of the peace, power, and gladness of Holiness, it is, possibly, because you entertain some mistaken notions respecting it. The ability of the Devil to lead people astray on this, as on many other questions, is largely in proportion to his power to deceive them. Can I better make you understand what is meant by Purity of Heart?

You will remember that in my last Letter I tried to show you that by a Pure Heart we did not mean a heart that could not, or would not, be tempted, or that could not, or would not, be called to suffer; nor that the Soldier out of whose heart all impurity had been expelled could not sin, or would have reached such a state of experience beyond which he would not be able to grow in faith, and hope, and charity, and in all the Graces of the Holy Spirit.

What, then, is a Pure Heart? I reply that a Pure Heart is a heart that has been cleansed by the Holy Spirit from all sin, and enabled to please God in all it does; to love Him with all its powers, and its neighbor as itself. Where this experience is enjoyed by anyone it may be said that God has made the heart Pure, even as He is Pure.

But here I may be asked the question, "Does not God bestow this wonderful deliverance from sin on the soul at conversion? Does He not sanctify and make it good and holy at the same time that He pardons its sins?" No, I reply; although a great work is done for the soul at conversion, its deliverance from sin at that time is not



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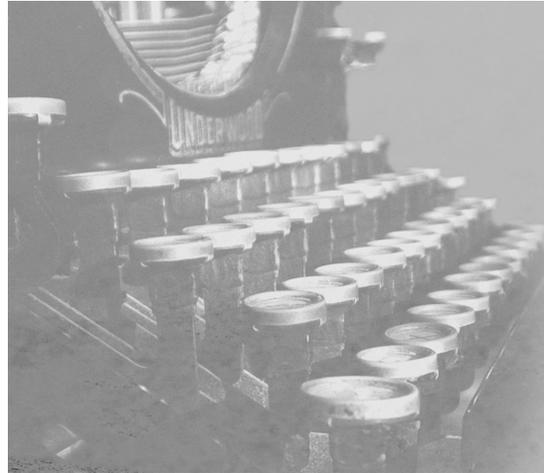
complete. It is true, that He does a great deal for a man when He makes that remarkable change. He destroys the bondage in which sin holds the transgressor; but the destruction of sin out of the heart and out of the life is not entire. Here let me try and show you the difference in the purification that comes to a man when he is fully cleansed. I will do this by setting forth the three different states into which the soul can come with respect to sin:

1. Before a man or a woman is converted, some particular sin is the master of the soul. That is, some unlawful appetite or selfish passion always rules the individual, and makes him act as it dictates.

What do I mean by sin being the master? I answer that the unconverted soul is held by it in a bondage from which it cannot get away. It has no choice. It is under its power. It must sin. The soul may have light to see its evil and ruinous character. It may hate it, struggle against it, make resolutions never to do it again. But it is driven, by its own nature, to do the things that it does not want to do; and is prevented from doing the things that it wishes to do, often, as the Apostle describes, crying out in bitterness of spirit, as it struggles and fights with it, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this wretched condition of slavery that is worse than death?"

This is the experience of every unsaved man and woman; at least of everyone who has light to see what an evil thing sin is. It is true, that the character of the mastering sin will differ in different persons. In some people the governing evil may be something that is looked upon by the world as vulgar, such as drunkenness, or lust, or dishonesty, or gambling, or some other evil passion that has gotten hold of the sinner, and from which he cannot get away, and for which every precious thing on earth and in Heaven is sacrificed. In other cases, it may be some sin that is not so much despised by what is called the respectable part of the community, such as pride, ambition, selfishness, secret infidelity or the like. But, in some form or other, sin rules in the heart of every ungodly man. He is mastered by sin.

2. Now, let us look at the Second State into which a man can come with respect to Sin. When he is saved, not only does he receive the pardon of sin, but deliverance from its bondage. The yoke is broken, the fetters are snapped, the prison doors are opened,



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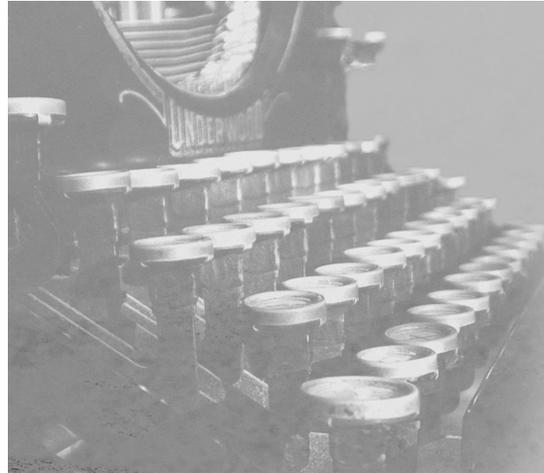
he is free! Instead of sin being his master, he is the master of sin. Instead of drink, or temper, or money-worship, or worldly pleasure, or some other devilish thing driving him down the broad way to destruction, against his judgment, against his own wishes, against the strivings of the Spirit, he is made free to do the Will of God and to climb the narrow way to Heaven.

But, great and glorious as is the change wrought in the heart at conversion, maybe deliverance is not complete. The power of sin is broken, but there are still certain evil tendencies left in the soul. There are what the Apostle terms "the roots of bitterness." These evils ordinarily grow and increase in power, involving the soul in constant conflict, and as the time goes by, often gain the mastery, and as the result, there is much sinning and repenting.

3. Then comes the Third State. Tired of this conflict, hating these internal evils, weeping over the pride and malice, and envy and selfishness, that the soul still finds within, it rises up, and cries out:

"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 sins I despise?
Tell me, can I never be free
From this terrible bondage within?
Is there no deliverance for me?
Must I always have sin dwell within?"

To this question God sends the glad answer back: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them." "All things are possible to him that believeth." Then the soul believes, the sanctifying Spirit falls, and the Third Stage is reached – which is Salvation from all sin.



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In the First stage the Soul is Under Sin. In the Second stage the Soul is Over Sin. In the Third stage the Soul is Without Sin.

In which stage are you, my Comrades? Settle it for yourselves. Have you got a Pure Heart? Examine yourselves. What is your reply?

Some of you in describing your experience can adopt the words of the Apostle, with a little variation, and say: The very God of peace has sanctified me wholly: and He preserves my whole spirit and soul and body blameless, and He will continue to do so unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that has called me to this experience of Purity, who also will do it.

All glory to God, my Comrades. Give Him all the praise. Be careful to "walk in the light, as He is in the light," then shall you have fellowship with Him and with other sanctified souls, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son shall keep you cleansed from all sin. In which case He will use you to promote His glory, make you useful, and show you still greater things.

To those who know that they do not possess a Pure Heart, I put the question, Will you have one now?

God is waiting to cleanse you. What doth hinder your receiving the purifying Baptism? "Now is the accepted time." Tell God that all the doubtful things shall be given up, and then go down before Him, singing while you kneel:

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone,
Laughs at impossibilities, And cries,
'It now is done.'"

Yours affectionately,
William Booth