

WHAT CONSTITUTES PURITY OF HEART

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." – Matt. 5:8.

THE WORD pure is a comprehensive term, meaning without adulteration, sincere, unsullied. Purity of heart is purity of motive, of intention, of effort, of will – purity in the sense of transparency, of truthfulness. In other words, Blessed are the honest-hearted – those who have absolutely right intentions. The word heart in this text does not refer to the organ which pumps the blood throughout the system, but to the intention, the will of the man.

In his creation, man was made in the image of God, and so was originally pure in heart – honest, sincere, truthful, perfect in intention; but by reason of the fall from his natural condition, sin and selfishness have developed in his heart, and the Godlike qualities given him in his creation have been to a considerable degree obliterated. While there are many worldly people who to some extent might claim honesty of heart, yet only those who have given themselves to God in full consecration can belong to the class which shall see Him.

When one has made a full consecration of himself and has been begotten by the Holy Spirit, he is said to have a new heart, a new will, new ambitions, new desires. Where the conversion from sin to righteousness is thorough, it may be truthfully said, "Old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) To accomplish so radical a change requires the operation of a powerful influence – that of the Holy Spirit.

Purity of thought, however, does not mean absolute perfection of thought, word and deed. To this condition no member of the fallen race can attain until the beneficent influences of the Kingdom shall have restored the race to its original perfection. But to *will* right, to *will* perfectly, to be pure in *heart*, is quite possible; indeed, it is very necessary to all who desire Divine approval. The standard set before

us, to which our hearts, our wills, *must* give assent, is the Divine Standard, "Be ye *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." – Matt. 5:48.

As long as we are in the flesh, we are obliged to think, to speak and to act *through* the *imperfect medium* of the *fallen body*, whose affections are continually in opposition to the new will and *must be resisted*. Therefore to perform all that the new will would prompt is sometimes beyond the ability of the Lord's most earnest followers: and all have need that the merit of Christ cover their blemishes, so that the new will, the new heart, may be [R5149 : page 389] judged of the Lord and tested as to its worthiness or unworthiness of eternal life and the attendant blessings which God has promised to the overcomer.

Only the pure in heart have the promise of *seeing God*. These continue faithful to the end of their pilgrimage; and not only do they attain the character-likeness of the Lord Jesus in their purity of heart *intention* toward all, but eventually they shall be made like Him and "see Him as He is," in the glorious change of the First Resurrection. – I John 3:2.

HONORABLE MOTIVES INDICATIVE OF HEART PURITY

When one finds imperfection in himself, when he discovers that he is not up to the glorious standard of righteousness set forth in the Scriptures, when he realizes that he comes short of the glory of God, then it becomes his privilege to seek to amend his conduct. The very act of deciding to do right is the beginning of the process by which one gets a new mind, a new will. This renewing of the mind corresponds to the perfecting of certain organs of the brain.

The will is able to control the whole body. Occasionally there will be opposition from one or another of the lower organs, which will resent the control of the superior ones; but in a general way, the will has the mastery. The qualities which constitute the mind were

originally a part of the image of God; but all of the powers of the human mind have been injured by the fall of man. All have been more or less weakened.

The organs of veneration, conscientiousness and firmness form a very powerful combination. If these qualities rule the life, the growth of the new mind will be rapid. Whoever has sufficient brain capacity to determine to do right and to serve God to the best of his ability, may, notwithstanding the weakness of his flesh, *will* to live in accordance with the Divine standard. So long as the motives of his new will are honorable, he is pure in heart; and as long as he maintains that condition, he [R5149 : page 390] has the assurance that he may ultimately reach perfection through obedience.

In olden times, this purity of heart intention was as much as any one could have. On one occasion, Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15.) In that statement the old warrior manifested purity of heart – the determination of the *mind* to serve the Lord. David and all the other Ancient Worthies had this determination. This was as much as they could do; and therefore, they had this testimony, that they "pleased God." – Heb. 11:5,6,39.

Whoever has this determination shall be blessed. He shall one day see the light of God's countenance. If, however, for a season he should fail to maintain this standard, there would be a cloud between him and the Lord. This can be removed only by repentance and forgiveness. Then with the Psalmist he could say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." – Psa. 116:7.

During the Gospel Age, the people of God may have, not only this purity of heart, or conversion to the Lord, turning to Him in fulness of consecration through the precious blood of Christ, but also something more. They may have the Divine acceptance of that consecration and the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Therefore these are the children of God in a sense peculiar to this Age. These may cry, "Abba, Father." (Rom.

8:15.) To them, God is not merely the Controller of the Universe, but their Father.

During the Gospel Age, the people of God may have special blessings greater than anything previously enjoyed. They have the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, which comes through the Divine Word, the Divine providences, etc. It requires an illumination of our mental conceptions in order that we may see God. Therefore the Church of Christ, who are begotten of the Holy Spirit, may see Him with the eyes of their understanding in a sense in which the Ancient Worthies could not.

If we maintain our purity of *heart* by purity of *mind*, we may have the assurance of future blessings as well as of present favor and happiness. If this be our course in "the life that now is," we have the Lord's promise that we shall see Him in a very special sense in the life "which is to come." We shall be changed to spirit beings and shall see Him as He is and shall share His glory. Every one who has this hope within him purifies himself, even as the Lord is pure. – I John 3:2,3.

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