



Chapter 1 – PURITY: WHAT IT IS

Matthew 5:8 – *Blessed are the pure in heart. for they shall see God.*

My Dear Comrades, – We Salvationists are always singing or praying or talking about a Pure Heart. Indeed, there are few subjects of which we more frequently speak, or in which we more truly glory. Some of our most beautiful and heart-stirring songs are on this theme. Perhaps, no one is more frequently sung by us than that commencing,

"Oh for a heart to praise my God!
A heart from sin set free!
A heart that always feels the Blood,
So freely spilt for me! "

Is not that beautiful? But it goes on better still –

"A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of Love Divine;
Perfect and right, and pure and good,
A copy, Lord, of Thine!"

Great, however, as is the power of such songs to stir our hearts, perhaps nothing delights the genuine Salvationist more than the definite testimonies of those living in the enjoyment of the Blessing, or the earnest prayers for its bestowment, or the fervent appeals to Comrades to secure this Pearl of Great Price, so often heard of in our ranks.

And yet I am afraid that many of our Soldiers do not definitely experience and openly profess the enjoyment of the Blessing; and I have been thinking that, perhaps, it is because the subject is not so well understood as it should be. I propose, therefore, to try to explain it in a few Letters, which I hope my Comrades will carefully consider.



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PURITY OF HEART

Now, please remember that my subject is "Purity of Heart." I want to explain what we mean by a Pure Heart; to show how you may obtain the precious treasure, if you are not possessed of it already; and how you may keep the Blessing when attained. I will start off by saying: We all know what is meant by being Pure. When we talk about the purity of things around us, we mean that they are clean and unadulterated. That is that they are not only without dirt or filthiness, but have no inferior substance mixed with them.

When we say that a man is pure, in the religious sense, we mean that he is right and honest and true inside and out; that he not only professes, but practices the things that have to do with his duty to God and man.

Sin is spoken of in the Bible as filthiness or defilement of the body, mind, or spirit. Purity in Religion must mean, therefore, the absence of such filthy things as drunkenness, gluttony, dishonesty, cheating, falsehood, pride, malice, bad tempers, selfishness, unbelief, disobedience, or the like.

In short, to be pure in soul, signifies deliverance from all and everything which the Lord shows you to be opposed to His Holy Will. It means that you not only possess the ability to live the kind of life that He desires, but that you actually do live it.

Now, Purity, I need not tell you, my Comrades, is much admired and greatly desired by all right-minded beings. To begin with: We all like material purity; for instance, I am sure that everyone reading this Letter prefers to have a clean body. When you rise in the morning, you are not comfortable till you have washed yourselves. When the miners come from the pit, or the farmers from the field, or the girls from the factory, their first demand is for water with which to cleanse themselves.

You like clean clothes and clean linen, do you not? Consider the money and labor that are expended in keeping your garments clean.

You like a clean home. See how the housewife scrubs and washes and brushes and dusts to keep the floor and windows and furniture clean.



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You like a clean city. What a laborious and costly sweeping of the streets, and carrying away of rubbish there is; and what money is spent on the fixing and cleansing of sewers to keep our towns and cities sweet and pure.

We like this sort of purity, because it is pleasant to the eye and good for health. We know that dirt is hateful to the senses, breeds vermin, generates cholera, plague, and diseases in general, and hurries people to the grave. So we hate it, and say, "Away with it; let us be clean!"

But all right-minded beings admire the purity of the soul far more than they do the purity of the body, or the clothes, the home, or anything else; and that, because it is so much more important. For instance:

(a) God loves Soul Purity. It is His nature to do so. I have no doubt, like us He prefers to see His children outwardly clean. He tells us, through Paul, that we are to have our bodies washed with pure water; but the washing of the heart is far more desirable to Him than that of the body.

"His saints are lovely in His sight,
He views His children with delight;
He sees their hope, He knows their fear,
And looks, and loves His image there."

Yes, God delights in Holiness. Heaven, His dwelling place, is pure. Its inhabitants are pure. Its employments, and enjoyments, and worship are all alike pure.

(b) The Angels love Purity. If any unholy creature could, by any means, be introduced into the Celestial City, the inhabitants would, I am sure, avoid such a creature, as we should avoid a being who had some dreadful disease.

(c) The Devils know that Purity is a precious thing; although they hate it and oppose it with all their might.



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(d) Many wicked men admire Purity. They look on it as being beautiful and desirable in others, although they regard it as being impossible to them. In their thoughtful moments, when the Spirit of God strives with them, when the recollections of the innocent days gone by crowd into their memories, and they see people who they know are clean and good, they hate themselves because of their own impurity, although all the time refusing to submit to God, and to accept the Salvation that would make them pure.

(e) Lost souls in Hell feel how infinitely superior Holiness is to Wickedness. They see now how much better it would have been for them if they had washed their hearts in the Blood of the Lamb when they had the privilege of doing so. Oh, what would they not give to have such opportunities as those enjoyed by you!

Are you in love with Purity, my Comrades? Perhaps you possess it. Perhaps you have been to Jesus for the cleansing Power, laid yourselves at His feet, given up your doubtful things, offered yourselves to do His Will, living or dying, and believed that the Blood of Jesus Christ has made you clean.

Oh, if that experience has been yours, happy are you, and happier still if you are walking in the power and peace of that experience today. If it is so, I congratulate you; I delight in you, and praise God on your account.

But if this Blessing is not yours, are you longing after it? Does the thought of it fill your soul with desire? Does it make you feel like the poet, when he sang:

"O glorious hope of perfect love!
It lifts me up to things above,
It bears on eagles' wings;
It gives my ravished soul a taste,
And makes me for some moments feast
With Jesus' priests and kings."



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Come along, my Comrades. Your happiness and your influence are all connected with your being made holy. Oh, I beseech you to kneel down here and now, and ask God to make you each and all pure, by the Power of the Holy Ghost, through the Blood of the Lamb.

Yours affectionately,

William Booth