

**Articles and Sermons :: How To Obtain a Clean Heart - G. A. McLaughlin****How To Obtain a Clean Heart - G. A. McLaughlin, on: 2005/3/22 9:29**

How To Obtain a Clean Heart  
by George Asbury McLaughlin

In the warfare of evil against the good every inch of ground is gained only after the most obstinate contest. Dislodged from one position the enemy only retreats to another, which has to be assailed and taken in the same manner as the former. When the importance and necessity and possibility of possessing "a heart from sin set free" have been proved and admitted, the battle has only begun, the chief effort of the enemy is to switch us off the right road to the obtainment of the blessing. A wrong road to a good place is no better than a right road to a bad place. In either instance we shall get where we ought not to be.

When Pharaoh promised to let the children of Israel go, he said, "Only do not go a great way off." It seems as if Satan said to many Christians, "Yes, I see that you feel your need of a clean heart, and it is right that you should have it, but get it in a reasonable way. Strive hard for it or wait until you grow into it, or seek it by evolution."

With him it is just as well if you seek it the wrong way as though you did not seek it at all. The Psalmist sought it by faith. This is the Bible method. It is not the popular method. The faith method of salvation has never been popular with the world or the worldly part of the church.

There is no chance for any self-glory, to submit and receive it by faith. Salvation by faith is not popular in the world. It is never praised up in the daily papers nor where men meet on the exchange or the market place. The natural man has much to say about works and charities, etc., but he ridicules your idea of being saved by faith. The religionist of the church is as much opposed to the cleansing of the heart by the faith method.

The late Dr. Curry used to say that the idea of religion that now obtains in the church is to be converted by faith and then go on and finish the work ourselves by our own doing instead of trusting God to complete it. Finishing our salvation by our own righteousness. But David obtained it by faith. Paul declared that he wished not to be found in "mine own righteousness of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The reader will notice that the subject of this chapter is HOW TO OBTAIN. We might have used the word attain, but it would have been incorrect. The two words Attain and Obtain express exactly the two theories.

Man seeks to attain a clean heart, when he seeks it by his own efforts, like a boy who seeks to stretch himself up to a certain height, thinking to make himself taller. This is the human method of doing it for ourselves, by growth, evolution, etc. To obtain is to receive it as a gift from God. By faith we obtain it as a gift. By the growth, culture and work method we seek to attain it, but all in vain.

All salvation that we ever receive is by gift from God. There is not a passage in the word of God that says it is by works or by growth. The psalmist prayed for it and expected it as a gift, or he never would have asked for it and expected it. No man prays for a thing which he expects to get by his own efforts. It is absurd to think that the Psalmist would have prayed to God for a thing that God would not give him, but that he must get by his own striving.

There is not a passage in the word of God that declares that we have our hearts purified by growth. All the passages that speak on the subject declare that it is by faith. When Paul stood before Agrippa and made his notable defense, he declared that Jesus gave him a commission to preach while on the road to Damascus. In that commission, among other things, it was declared that he was to so declare that gospel that men might receive an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith." If Jesus told Paul that men are sanctified by faith, it must be so.

Who dares to say it is by growth? Peter declares in Acts 15:9, "Purifying their hearts by faith." How do men dare, in the face of these straight, direct passages to the contrary in all the word of God, to set up human methods of saving men from sin! Peter declares that this purification comes through faith in the promises. Hear him: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (11. Peter: 4).

This cleansing could come only through the promises of God. And only through the promises according to our faith.

Shall we go by the word of God or the opinions of men. This is the point to which all this question comes. Do you want to risk the matter of your fitness for heaven to the opinions of men or to the positive declaration of the word of God. Let each decide for himself.

There seems to be nothing according to the teaching of the Bible that pleases God more than to have us trust him. He declares that, without faith it is impossible to please him." When Jesus was on earth nothing pleased him more than faith, and nothing caused his displeasure in all the conduct of his disciples as their unbelief.

Some one says that he marveled only twice in all the gospel narrative: once in finding faith where he would naturally not have expected it in the case of the heathen centurion, whom the Jews introduced to Him as a very worthy man, because "he loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue" (Luke 7: 5). Like their successors today, they were ready to call any man worthy who does much for their ecclesiasticism. Their idea was simply the worthiness of works.

But Jesus marveled at the man's faith because he trusted implicitly in him to raise his servant from the sick bed. "When Jesus heard these things he marveled at him, and said unto the people that followed him, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Jesus marveled again when he came to his own country and began to teach his old neighbors, who refused to believe in him. The record says that he could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief, and that "he marveled because of their unbelief." In the one instance he marveled to find faith where it might not have been expected. In the other case he marveled to find unbelief where faith ought to have been expected.

We fancy he is still marveling to find unbelief in his professed church, many of whom profess to believe that he is divine, but deny that he has the power to cleanse from sin, but has left the business to their own efforts and striving.

A clean heart being obtained by faith, it becomes very important that we know how to exercise that faith.

We feel like devoting a little space here to help those persons who desire to exercise this faith but are unable to understand the way or method of grasping the promise by faith. The writer prays that these words may help some one. Will the reader, if he has not yet received this glorious gift, pray that God may guide him in reading these lines as the writer has prayed in writing them!

There are many people who are talking faith all about us who never have exercised faith. We once had a Sunday school superintendent come thirty miles to a meeting we were holding, for the sole purpose of seeking a clean heart. For days he came to the altar trying to agonize himself into the blessing. One night he arose and said, "I have been talking faith for thirty years and yet never had any." Faith is such a simple thing and man is so anxious to do something to save himself, that he usually looks clear over it, in his desire to do some great thing.

A simple illustration may help the reader right here. When Jesus was going through Samaria, a company of ten lepers spied him afar off, and cried at the top of their voices, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When he saw them he simply said, "Go show yourselves unto the priests." Leprosy is the Bible type of sin and the cure of leprosy is the type of the cure of sin. Hence, as leprosy and sin are both cured by divine power, and as the one is the type of the other, if we can find out how they were cured of leprosy we can do the same and be cured of sin.

When a man believed that God had healed him of leprosy anciently, it was his duty to go to the priest and allow him to make an examination. In the book of Leviticus the signs of a cure are mentioned. If the priest found these he could pronounce him clean. Jesus told them to go to the priests and let them see that they were cured -- just what they had been wanting to do for many a weary year. But when He said "Go show yourselves unto the priests," they knew it meant healing, and they started right off and acted as if they were healed, and as they went they found that they were healed. This was faith. They acted as if it were so and they found that it was so. Reader, give yourself entirely and sincerely to God for time and eternity, then pray this prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." AND THEN GO FORTH AND ACT JUST AS IF YOU BELIEVED HE WAS DOING IT, AND YOU WILL FIND THAT HE IS DOING IT. This is faith. It is acting as if we believed it was so. To pray and then act as if God were not keeping his word is to insult him. Jesus says, "Therefore, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." He does not say believe that ye will receive them sometime in the future, but believe that ye are receiving them.

We knew a lady who was praying for a clean heart; she had gone to her room and thrown herself upon her knees and sa

id, "O Lord, I never will leave this place until you give me a clean heart." She had scarcely uttered the words when her little boy came to the foot of the stairs and called, "Mother, I want you. You promised to go to church with me this afternoon." "Yes," was the reply, "I will come right along." "Yes, but it is time to go now," replied the little fellow. "What shall I do?" was now her thought. "I have told the Lord that I will stay here until he gives me a clean heart and I have told my boy that I will come right away, and I never yet told him a wrong story. What shall I do?" Then she asked herself the question, "Can't I trust God just as my boy trusts me?"

"Yes, I will," was her utterance, and she arose from her knees and went down stairs, put on her bonnet and went to church trusting God. When the invitation was given for all who had a pure heart to arise, she arose with others and said, "I have lately come into the experience of a clean heart. If you want me to go to the altar I am willing." And from that day she had a clean heart, as was evinced in the marvelous way in which God led and directed her efforts for his glory. She believed God and acted as if she believed it was true, and like the ten lepers she found that it was true. Reader, go thou and do likewise.

**Re: How To Obtain a Clean Heart - G. A. McLaughlin - posted by \_Disciple\_ (), on: 2005/3/22 12:34**

Amen, great article

Quote:

-----freecd wrote:

Man seeks to attain a clean heart, when he seeks it by his own efforts, like a boy who seeks to stretch himself up to a certain height, thinking to make himself taller. This is the human method of doing it for ourselves, by growth, evolution, etc. To obtain is to receive it as a gift from God. By faith we obtain it as a gift. By the growth, culture and work method we seek to attain it, but all in vain.

i recognise myself in this so much, i always think i can stand tall by myself, but everytime i fail, God shows me how dependant i am. He wants the control, i give up, i tried so many times, and let Him have it all, all my life.

what i try to do is in vain, what Christ can do in me last for ever! all i have to do is surrender all...

Eph 2:8,9:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

in Him our Saviour!

William