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THE EXTENT OF THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

There are other difficulties which attend the effort to make heart purity stand for the second blessing.

The simple statement of doctrine in connection with this expression is, that the sinner, after conversion, has still remaining in his nature seeds, roots of sin, called inbred sin, which, sooner or later, manifest themselves in the life and conduct,—but that the blessing of heart purity takes these all out of the heart, rendering it pure, and capable of being filled with perfect love, and that this when accomplished is witnessed to by the Holy Spirit.

Now, we gladly admit that the substance of this statement of doctrine is both scriptural and Wesleyan, we simply take exception to the manner, the method of stating these truths as not apostolic. The scriptural order we maintain is, that the sinner, after conversion, may receive the Holy Ghost, as the promise of the Father, and obey Him as his sole law in life, when, as a necessary result purity of heart becomes the experience of such a believer. Obedient walk in the Spirit being the only condition also for retaining and growing in this grace of the Spirit.

Well, some may ask, what does it matter what order is adopted in receiving spiritual blessings, so long as the result is secured?

This argument would have considerable force if it could be shown that the same results, in every case, or even usually, did follow. But this we are inclined to believe is by no means the case. But even then it would scarcely be safe to change scriptural order.

King David found, to his sorrow, that it was a hazardous matter to change the Divine order, even in transporting the Ark of the Covenant from one point to another. For although his method had much to commend itself before men, it ended in disaster.

The common-sense advice of Wesley to his helpers. "It is better to keep our rules than to try to mend them," is good advice in this matter also. It is far better, whilst it cannot be wrong, to follow implicitly the scriptural order so plainly set forth in the teachings of Christ and the first Christians.

The Saviour nowhere taught that the blessing of heart purity was a distinctive second blessing, after the manner of modern thought. In His few allusions to the subject of purity He in no wise connected it with the gift of the Holy Ghost.

We shall not stay to expand this argument by quoting these passages, but remark in the passing that anyone who looks them up will find that they not only bear out this thought, but also show, that if His references to purity of heart teach a distinct experience, then it would follow that the reception of the Holy Ghost should be looked on as always to be a distinct *third* experience or blessing, which teaching would greatly confuse the whole Gospel plan, and would make Peter and Christ at variance in their deliverances on this subject.

Then again, what difficulties are cleared away by the Pentecostal method when considering the personal experiences of the New Testament saints. Again and again the reasonable demand is made, to show where and when Paul and the other writers of the New Testament obtained the blessing of heart purity; and to say the least of it, there is much confusion and lack of unanimity in answering this question. But we find no difficulty in replying to it when the scriptural order is followed, for the day of Pentecost fully answers it with many, and the continued story of the Acts of the Apostles clearly points to it in others; whilst the epistles are full of allusions to this same definite experience.

Further, difficulties are met with in the one teaching as contrasted with the other in the matter of *inbred sin*, remains of the carnal nature, etc. In the one case the whole subject is brought down to such simplicity that the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein, but in the other case there is room for a load of transcendentalism.