

The Pure in Heart Blessed

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

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God formerly delivered his law from mount Sinai, by an audible voice, with the sound of a trumpet, with the appearance of devouring fire, with thunders and lightnings, and earthquakes. But the principal discoveries of God's word and will to mankind were reserved to be given by Jesus Christ, his own Son, and the Redeemer of men, who is the light of the world.

In this sermon of Christ, of which the text is a part, we hear him delivering the mind of God also from a mountain. Here is God speaking, as well as from mount Sinai, and as immediately, but after a very different manner. There God spake by a preternatural formation of sounds in the air; here he becomes incarnate, takes on him our nature, and speaks, and converses with us, not in a preternatural, awful, and terrible manner, but familiarly as one of us. His face was beheld freely by all that were about him; his voice was human, without those terrors which made the children of Israel desire that God might speak to them immediately no more; and the revelation which he makes of God's word is no more clear and perfect, and fuller of the discoveries of spiritual duties, of the spiritual nature of the command of God, of our spiritual and true happiness, and of mercy and grace to mankind. John i. 17, "For the law' was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.¹"

This discourse of Christ on the mount seems principally levelled against the false notions, and carnal prejudices that were at that day embraced by the nation of the Jews; and those benedictions, which we have in the beginning of his sermon, were sayings that were mere paradoxes to them, wholly contrary to the notions which they had received. That he, who was poor in spirit, was blessed, was a doctrine contrary to the received opinion of the world, and especially of that nation, who were exceedingly ambitious of the praise of men, and highly conceited of their own righteousness. And that he was a blessed and happy man, who mourned for sin, and lived mortified to the pleasures and vanities of the world, was contrary to their notions, who placed their highest happiness in worldly and carnal things. So also that they who were meek, were blessed, was another doctrine very contrary to their notions, who were a very haughty, proud nation, and very revengeful, and maintained the lawfulness of private revenge, as may be seen in the 38th verso. Equally strange to them was the declaration that they who hungered and thirsted after righteousness were happy, for they placed their happiness, not in possessing a high degree of righteousness, but in having a great share of worldly good. They were wont to labour for the meat that perisheth, they had no notion of any such thing as spiritual riches, or of happiness in satisfying a spiritual appetite. The Jews were dreadfully in the dark at that day about spiritual things. The happiness which they expected by the Messiah was a temporal and carnal, and not a spiritual, happiness. Christ also tells them that they were blessed who were merciful, and who were peace-makers; which was also a doctrine that the Jews especially stood in need of at that day, for they were generally of a cruel, unmerciful, persecuting spirit.

The truth which Christ teaches, them in the text, that they were blessed who were pure in heart, was a thing wholly beyond their conceptions. The Jews at this time placed almost the whole of religion in external things, in a conformity to the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses. They laid great stress on tithing mint, and

anise, and cummin, and on their traditions, as in washing hands before meat and the like; but they neglected the weightier matters of the law, and especially such as respected holiness of heart. They took more care to have clean hands, and a clean outside, than a clean heart, as Christ tells them, Matt, xxiii. 25,26: " Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within ye are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the; cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also,"

We may observe concerning the words of the text,

- 1, That Christ pronounces the pure in heart, blessed. Christ here accommodates his instructions to the human nature. He knew that all mankind were in the pursuit of happiness, he has directed them in the true way to it, and he tells them what they must become in order to be blessed and happy,
2. He gives the reason why such are blessed, or wherein the blessedness of such consists; that they shall see God. It is probable the Jews supposed that it was a great privilege to see God, from those passages in the law, where there is an account of Moses' earnestly desiring to see God's glory; and from the account that is given of the seventy elders, Exod. xxiv. 9-] 1, "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire-stone, and, as it were, the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink.."

It is also probable that they had very imperfect notions of what the vision of God was, and of the happiness that consisted in it, and that their notion of this matter, agreeably to the rest of their carnal, childish notions, was of some outwardly splendid and glorious sight, to please the eye and to entertain the fancy. From these words I shall derive two propositions.

- I. It is a truly blessed thing to the soul of man to see God.
- II. To be pure in heart, is the certain and only way to attain to this blessedness.

I. It is a truly blessed thing to the soul of man to see God. Here I shall attempt to show,

1. What is meant by seeing God.

First. It is not any sight with the bodily eyes; the blessedness of the soul does not enter in at that door.

This would make the blessedness of the soul dependent on. the body, or the happiness of man's superior part dependent on the inferior; and this would have confirmed the carnal and childish notions of the Jews.

God is a spirit, and is not to be seen with the bodily eyes. We find it attributed to God, that he is invisible. Heb. xi. 27, " As seeing him, who is invisible." Col. i. 15, "Who is the image of the invisible God." It is mentioned as a part of God's glory, 1 Tim. i. 17, " Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen." That it is not any sight with the bodily eyes, is evident, because the unembodied souls of the saints see God, and the angels also, who are spirits, and were never united to bodies." Matt, xviii. 10, " Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."¹

It is not any form or visible representation, nor shape, nor colour, nor shining light, that is seen, wherein this great happiness of the soul consists. Indeed, God was wont to manifest himself of old in outward glorious appearances. There was a shining light that was called the glory of the Lord. Thus the glory of the Lord

was said to descend on Mount Sinai, and in the tabernacle of the congregation. There was an outward visible token of God's presence, and the seventy elders, when they saw God in the mount, saw a visible shape. It seems also that when Moses desired to see God's glory, and when God passed by and covered him with his hand in the cleft of the rock, that Moses saw some visible glory. Exod. xxxiii, 18—23, " And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness to pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live.¹" But it seems that God then condescended to the infant state of the church, and to the childish notions that were entertained in those days of lesser light; and Moses' request seems to have been answered, by God making his goodness to pass before him, and proclaiming his name, and giving him a strong apprehension of the things contained in that, name, rather than by showing him any outward glory.

The saints in heaven will behold an outward glory as they are in the human nature of Christ, which is united to the Godhead, as it is the body of that person who is God; and there will doubtless be appearances of a divine and inimitable glory and beauty in Christ's glorified body, which it will indeed be a refreshing and blessed sight to see.

But the beauty of Christ's body as seen by the bodily eyes, will be ravishing and delightful, chiefly as it will express his spiritual glory. The majesty that will appear in Christ's body, will express and show forth the spiritual greatness and majesty of the divine nature; the pureness and beauty of that light and glory, will express the perfection of the divine holiness; the sweetness and ravishing mildness of his countenance, will express his divine and spiritual love and grace.

Thus it was when the three disciples beheld Christ at his transfiguration upon the mount. They beheld a wonderful outward glory in Christ's body, an inexpressible beauty in his countenance; but that outward glory and beauty delighted them principally as an expression of the divine excellencies of his mind, as we may see from their manner of speaking of it. It was the sweet mixture of majesty and grace in his countenance, by which they were ravished. 2 Pet. i. 16'—18, " We were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount," But especially from the account which John gives of it. John i. 14, " And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth;" where John very probably had in his mind what he had seen in the mount at the transfiguration. Grace and truth are not outward, but spiritual glories.

Secondly. It is an intellectual view by which God is seen.

God is a spiritual being, and he is beheld with the understanding. The soul has in itself those powers which are capable of apprehending objects, and especially spiritual objects, without looking through the windows of the outward senses. This is a more perfect way of perception than by the eyes of the body. We are so accustomed and habituated to depend upon our senses, and our intellectual powers are so neglected and disused, that we are ready to conceive that seeing things with the bodily eyes is the most perfect way of apprehending them. But it is not so; the eye of the soul is vastly more perfect than the eye of the body: yet it is not every apprehension of God by the understanding that may be called the seeing of him. As,

1st. The having an apprehension of God merely by hearsay.

If we hear of such a being as God, are educated in the belief that there is such a being, are told what sort of being he is, and what he has done, and are rightly told, and we give credit to what

we hear; yet if we have no apprehension of God in any other way, we cannot be said to see God in the sense of the text. This is not the beatific sight of God.

2d. If we have an apprehension of God merely by speculative reasoning.

If we come to some apprehension of God's being, and of his being almighty, all-wise, and good, by ratiocination, that is not what the Scripture calls seeing God. It is some more immediate way of understanding and viewing, what is called sight,; nor will such an apprehension as this merely ever make the soul truly blessed. Nor,

3d. Is every more immediate and sensible apprehension of God, that seeing of him mentioned in the text, and that which is truly beatific.

The wicked spirits in the other world have doubtless more immediate apprehensions of the being of God, and of his power and wrath, than the wicked in this world. They stand before God to be judged, they receive the sentence from him, they have a dreadful apprehension of his wrath and displeasure. But yet they are exceedingly remote from seeing God in the sense of the text.

But to see God, is this.

It is to have an immediate, sensible, and certain understanding of God's glorious excellency and love.

1st. There must be a *direct* and *immediate* sense of God's glory and excellency.

I say direct and immediate, to distinguish it from a mere perception that God is glorious and excellent by means of speculative and distant argumentation, which is a more indirect way of apprehending things. A true sense of the glory of God is that which can never be obtained by speculative ratiocination; and if men convince themselves by argument that God is holy, that never will give a sense of his amiable and glorious holiness. If they argue that he is very merciful, that will not give a sense of his glorious grace and mercy. It must be a more immediate, sensible discovery that must give the mind a real sense of the excellency and beauty of God. He that sees God, has a direct and immediate view of God's great and awful majesty, of his pure and beautiful holiness, of his wonderful and endearing grace and mercy.

2d. There is a certain understanding of his love, there is a certain apprehension, of his presence.

He that beholds God, does not merely see him as present by his essence, for so he is present with all, both godly and ungodly. But he is more especially present with those whom he loves, he is graciously present with them; and when they see him, they see him and know him to be so: they have an understanding of his love to them; they see him from love manifesting himself to them. He that has a blessed-making sight of God, not only has a view of God's glory and excellency, but he views it as having a property in it; he sees God's love to him; he receives the testimonies and manifestations of that love.

God's favour is sometimes in Scripture called his face: Psal. cxix. 58, where it is translated, " I entreated *thy favour* with my whole heart;" it is in the original "*thy face*," and God's *hiding* *his face*, is a very common expression to signify his withholding the testimonies of his favour.

To see God, as in the text, implies the sight of him as glorious and as gracious; a vision of the light of his countenance, both as it is understood of the effulgence of his glory, and the manifestations of his favour and love.

The discoveries which the saints have in this world of the glory and love of God, are often in Scripture called the sight of God. Thus it is said of Abraham, that he saw him who is invisible. Heb. xi. 27. So the saints are said to see as in a glass the glory of the Lord. 2 Cor. iii. 18, " But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Christ speaks of the spiritual knowledge of God. John xiv. 7, " If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." The saints in this world have an earnest of what is future, they have the dawnings of future light.

But the more perfect view which the saints have of God's glory and love in another world, is what is especially called the seeing of God. Then they shall see him as he is. That light which now is but a glimmering, will be brought to clear sunshine; that which is here but the dawning, will become perfect day.

Those intellectual views which will be granted in another world, are called seeing God.

1st. Because the view will be very direct;

as when we see things with the bodily eyes, God will, as it were, immediately discover himself to their minds, so that the understanding shall behold the glory and love of God, as a man beholds the countenance of his friend. The discoveries which the saints here have of God's excellency and grace, are immediate in a sense; that is, they do not mainly consist in ratiocination; but yet in another sense they are indirect, that is, they are by means of the gospel, as through a glass; but in heaven God will immediately excite apprehensions of himself, without the use of any such means.

2d. It is called seeing, because it will be most certain.

When persons see a thing with their own eyes, it gives them the greatest certainty they can have of it, greater than they can have by any information of others. So the sight that they will have in heaven will exclude all doubting. The knowledge of God which the saints have in this world, has certainty in it, but yet the certainty is liable to be interrupted with temptations, and some degree of doubtings, but there is no such a thing in heaven. The looking at the sun does not give a greater nor fuller certainty that it shines.

3d. It is called seeing, because the apprehension of God's glory and love is as clear and lively as when any thing is seen with bodily eyes.

When we are actually beholding any thing with our eyes in the meridian light of the sun, it does not give a more lively idea and apprehension of it than the saints in heaven have of the divine excellency and love of God. When we are looking upon things our idea is much more clear and perfect, and the impression stronger on the soul, than when we only think of a thing absent. But the intellectual views that the saints in heaven will have of God, will have far the advantage of bodily sight, it will be a much more perfect way of apprehending. The saints in heaven will see the glory of the body of Christ after the resurrection with bodily eyes, but they will have no more immediate and perfect way of seeing that visible glory than they will of beholding Christ's divine and spiritual glory. They will not want eyes to see that which is spiritual, as well as we can see any thing that is corporeal; they will behold God in an ineffable, and to us now inconceivable manner.

4th. The intellectual sight which the saints will have of God will make them as sensible of his presence, and give them as great advantages for conversing with him,

as the sight of the bodily eyes doth an earthly friend; yea, and more too; for when we see our earthly friends with bodily eyes, we have not the most full and direct sight of their principal part, even their souls. We see the qualities, and dispositions, and acts of their minds no otherwise than by outward signs of speech and behaviour; strictly speaking, we do not see the man, the soul, at all, but only its tabernacle or dwelling.

But their souls will have the most clear sight of the spiritual nature of God itself. They shall behold his attributes and disposition towards them more immediately, and therefore with greater certainty, than it is possible to see anything in the soul of an earthly friend by his speech and behaviour; and therefore their spiritual sight will give them greater advantage for conversing with God, than the sight of earthly friends with bodily eyes, or hearing them with our ears gives us for conversing with them.

2. I shall now give the reasons why the thus seeing God is that which will make the soul truly happy.

First. It yields a delight suitable to, the nature of an intelligent creature.

God hath made man, and man only, of all the creatures here below, an intelligent creature; and his reason and understanding are that by which he is distinguished from all inferior ranks of beings. Man's reason is, as it were, an heavenly ray, or, in the language of the wise man, it is "the candle of the Lord." It is that wherein mainly consists the natural image of God, it is the noblest faculty of man, it is that which ought to bear rule over the other powers; being given that it might govern the soul.

Therefore those delights are most suitable to the nature of man, that are intellectual, which result from the exercises of this noblest, this distinguishing faculty. God, by giving man understanding, made him capable of such delights, and fitted him for them, and designed that such pleasures as those should be his happiness.

Intellectual pleasures consist in the beholding of spiritual excellencies and beauties, but the glorious excellency and beauty of God are far the greatest. God's excellence is the supreme excellence. When the understanding of the reasonable creature dwells here, it dwells at the fountain, and swims in a boundless, bottomless ocean. The love of God is also the most suitable entertainment of the soul of man, which naturally desires the happiness of society, or of union with some other being. The love of so glorious a being is infinitely valuable, and the discoveries of it are capable of ravishing the soul above all other love. It is suitable to the nature of an intelligent being also, as it is that kind of delight that reason approves of. There are many other delights in which men indulge themselves, which, although they are pleasing to the senses and inferior powers, yet are contrary to reason; reason opposes the enjoyment of them, so that unless reason be suppressed and stifled, they cannot be enjoyed without a war in the soul. Reason, the noblest faculty, resists the inferior rebellious powers; and the more reason is in exercise, the more will it resist, and the greater will be the inward war and opposition.

But this delight of seeing God the understanding approves of; it is a thing most agreeable to reason that the soul should delight itself in this, and the more reason is in exercise, the more it approves of it.

So that when it is enjoyed, it is with inward peace, and a sweet tranquillity of soul; there is nothing in human nature that is opposite to it, but every thing agrees and conforms to it.

Secondly. The pleasure which the soul has in seeing God, is not only its delight, but it is at the same time its highest perfection and excellency.

Man's true happiness is his perfection and true excellency. When any reasonable creature finds that his excellency and his joy are the same thing, then he is come to right and real happiness, and not before. If a man enjoys any kind of pleasure and lives in it, how much soever he may be taken with what he enjoys, yet if he be not the more excellent for his pleasures, it is a certain sign that he is not a truly happy man. There are many pleasures that men are wont violently to pursue, which are no part of their dignity or perfection, but which, on the contrary, debase the man and make him vile. Instead of rendering the mind beautiful and lovely, they only serve to pollute it; instead of exalting its nature, they make it more akin to that of beasts.

But it is quite contrary with the pleasure that is to be enjoyed in seeing God. To see God is the highest honour and dignity to which the human nature can attain; that intellectual beholding of him is itself the highest excellency of the understanding. The great part of the excellency of man is his knowledge and understanding; but the knowledge of God is the most excellent and noble kind of knowledge.

The delight and joy of the soul in that sight are the highest excellency of the other faculty, viz., the will. The heart of man cannot be brought to a higher excellency than to have delight in God, and complacency in the divine excellency and glory. The soul, while it remains under the power of corruption and depravity, cannot have any delight in God's glory; and when its moral relish is so far changed that it is disposed to delight in it, it *is* most excellently disposed; and when it actually exercises delight in God, it is the most noble and exalted exercise of which it is capable. So that soul's seeing of God, and having pleasure and joy in the sight, is the greatest excellency of both the faculties.

Thirdly. The happiness of seeing God is a blessing without any mixture.

That pleasure has the best claim to be called man's true happiness, which comes unmixed, and without any alloy. But so doth the joy of seeing God; it neither brings any bitterness, nor will it suffer any.

1. This pleasure brings no bitterness with it.

That is not the case with other delights, in which natural men are wont to place their happiness; they are bitter sweets, yielding a kind of momentary pleasure in gratifying an appetite, but wormwood and gall are mingled in the cup. He who plucks these roses, finds that they grow on thorns: he who tastes of this honey is sure to find in it a sting. If men place their happiness in them, reason and conscience will certainly give them inward disturbance in their enjoyment. There will be the sting of continual disappointments, for carnal delights are of such a nature that they keep the soul, that places its happiness in them, always big with expectation and in eager pursuit; while they are evermore like shadows, and never yield what is hoped for. They who give themselves up to them, unavoidably bring upon themselves many heavy inconveniences. If they promote their pleasure in one way, they destroy their comforts in many other ways; and this sting ever accompanies them, that they are but short-lived, they will soon vanish and be no more.

And as to the pleasure found in the enjoyment of earthly friends, there is a bitterness goes also with that. An intense love to any earthly object, though it may afford high enjoyment, yet greatly multiplies our cares and anxieties through the defects and blemishes, the instability and

changeableness of the object, the calamities to which it is exposed, and the short duration of all such friendships, and of the pleasures thence arising.

Some men take a great deal of pleasure in study, in the increase of knowledge; but Solomon, who had great experience, long ago observed that this also is vanity, because he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. Eccl. i. 17, 18, "And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly; I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." But the delight which the sight of God affords to the soul, brings no bitterness with it, there is no disappointment accompanies it, it promises not more than it yields, but, on the contrary, the pleasure is greater than could be imagined before God was seen. It brings no sting conscience along with it, it brings no vexing care nor anxiety, it leaves no loathing nor disrelish behind it.

There is nothing in God which gives uneasiness to him who beholds him. The view of one attribute adds to the joy that is raised by another. A sight of the holiness of God gives unspeakable pleasure to the mind; the idea of it is a perception beyond measure the most delightful that can exist in a created mind. And then the beholding of God's grace adds to this joy, for the soul then considers that the Being who is so amiable in himself, is so communicative, so disposed to love and benevolence. The view of the majesty of God greatly heightens this joy: to behold such grace and goodness, and such goodness and majesty, united together. Especially will the sight of God's love to himself, the person beholding, increase the pleasure, when he considers that so great and glorious a being loves him, and is his God and friend. Again, the beholding of God's infinite power will still add to the pleasure, for he reflects that he, who is his friend, and loves him with so great a love, can do all things for him. So the beholding of his wisdom, because he thereby knows what is best for him, and knows how so to order things as shall make him most blessed. So the consideration of his eternity and immutability, it will rejoice him to think that his friend and his portion is an eternal and unchangeable friend and portion. The beholding of God's happiness will increase the joy, to consider that he is so happy, who is so much the object of his love. The love of God, in those who shall see God, will cause them exceedingly to rejoice in the happiness of God. Even the sight of God's vindictive justice will add to their joy. The justice of God will appear glorious to them, and will make them prize his love.

2. This joy is without mixture, not only as it brings not bitterness with it, but also as it will not suffer any.

The sight of God excludes every thing that is of a nature different from delight. This light is such as wholly excludes darkness.

It is not in the power of any earthly enjoyment to drive and shut out all trouble from the heart. If a man has some things in which he takes comfort and pleasure, there are others that yield him uneasiness and sorrow; if he has some things in the world that are sweet, there are others that are bitter, against which it is not in the power of his pleasures to help him. We never can find anything here below that shall make us so happy, but that we shall have grief and pleasure mixed together. This world, let us make the best of it, will be spotted with black and white, varied with clouds and sunshine, and to them who yield their hearts to it, it will yield pain as well as pleasure. But this pleasure of seeing God can suffer no mixture; for this pleasure of seeing God is so great and strong that it takes the full possession of the heart, it fills it perfectly full, so that there shall be no room for any sorrow, no room in any corner for any thing of an adverse nature from joy. There is no darkness that can bear such powerful light. It is impossible that they who see God face to face, who behold his glory and love so immediately as they do in heaven, should have any such thing as grief or pain in their hearts. When once the saints are come into God's presence, tears shall be wiped from their

eyes, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The pleasure will be so great, as fully and perfectly to employ every faculty; the sight of God's glory and love will be so wonderful, so engaging to the mind, and it shall keep all the powers of it in such strong attention, that the soul will be wholly possessed and taken up.

Again: There will be, in what they shall see, a sufficient antidote against every thing that would afford uneasiness, or that can have any tendency thereto. If there were sin in the heart before, that used by its exercise to disturb its peace and quiet, and was a seed and spring of trouble, the immediate and full sight of God's glory will at once drive it all away. Sin cannot remain in the heart which thus beholds God, for sin is a principle of enmity against God; but there can no enmity remain in one, who after this manner sees God's glory. It must and will wholly drive away any such principle, and change it into love. The imperfect sight that the saints have of God's glory here, transforms them in part into the same image; but this perfect sight will transform them perfectly. If there be the hatred of enemies, the vision of the love and power of God will be a sufficient antidote against it; so that it can give no uneasiness. If the saint is removed by death from all his earthly friends, and earthly enjoyments, that will give no uneasiness to him, when he sees what a fullness there is in God. He will see that there is all in him, so that he who possesses him can lose nothing: whatever is taken from him he sustains no loss. And whatever else there may be, that would otherwise afford grief and uneasiness to the soul, it cannot affect him who is in the presence of God and sees his face.

Fourthly. This joy of seeing God is the true blessedness of man, because the fountain that supplies it is equal to man's desire and capacity.

When God gave man his capacity of happiness, he doubtless made provision for the filling of it. There was some good which God had in his eye, when he made the vessel, and made it of such dimensions, which he knew to be sufficient to fill it; and doubtless that, whatever it be, is man's true blessedness; and that good which is found not to be commensurate to man's capacity and natural desires, and never can equal it, is certainly not that wherein man's happiness consists. Man's desires and capacities are commensurate one with another. When once the capacity is filled, the soul desires no more.

Now, in order to judge how great man's capacity is, we must consider the capacity of his principal and leading faculty, viz., his understanding. So great as is the capacity of that faculty, so great is man's capacity of enjoyment: so great a good as the soul is capable of understanding, so great a good it is capable of enjoying. As great a good as the soul is capable of comprehending in its perception and idea, so great a good is it capable of receiving with the other faculty, the will, which keeps pace with the understanding; and that good which the soul can receive with both faculties, of that is it capable of being made the possessor and enjoyer.

But it is easy to perceive that there is nothing here below that can give men such delight as shall be equal to this faculty. Let a man enjoy as great an affluence of earthly comforts as he will, still there is room; man's nature is capable of a great deal more, there are certain things wanting to which the understanding can extend itself, which he could wish were added.

But the fountain that supplies that joy and delight, which the soul has in seeing God, is sufficient to fill the vessel, because it is infinite. He that sees the glory of God, in his measure beholds that of which there is no end. The understanding may extend itself as far as it will; it doth but take its flight into an endless expanse, and dive into a bottomless ocean. It may discover more and more of the beauty and loveliness of God, but it never will exhaust the fountain. The body of man may as well swallow up the ocean, or his soul embrace immensity, as he can extend his faculties to the utmost of God's excellency.

So, in like manner, it may be said of the love of God. We can never, by soaring and ascending, come to the height of it; we can never, by descending, come to the depth of it; or, by measuring, know the length and breadth of it. Eph. iii. 18, 19, " That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that ye might be filled with the fullness of God." So that let the thoughts and desires extend themselves as they will, here is space enough for them, in which they may expand forever. How blessed therefore are they that do see God, who are come to this exhaustless fountain ! They have obtained that delight which gives full satisfaction; having come to this pleasure, they neither do nor can desire any more. They can sit down fully contented, and take up with this enjoyment forever and ever, and desire no change. After they have had the pleasure of beholding the face of God millions of ages, it will not grow a dull story; the relish of this delight will be as exquisite as ever, there is enough still for the utmost employment of every faculty.

***Fifthly.* This delight in the vision of God hath an unfailing foundation.**

God made man to endure forever, and therefore that which is man's true blessedness, we may conclude, has a sure and lasting foundation. As to worldly enjoyments, their foundation is a sandy one. that is continually wearing away, and certainly will at last let the building fall. If we take pleasure in riches, in a little while they will be gone; if we take pleasure in gratifying our senses, those objects whence we draw our gratifications will perish with the using; and our senses themselves also will be gone, the organs will be worn out, and our whole outward form will turn to dust. If we take pleasure in union with our earthly friends, that union must be broken; the bonds are not durable, but will soon wear asunder.

But he who has the immediate intellectual vision of God's glory and love, and rejoices in that, has his happiness built upon an everlasting rock. Isa. xxvi. 4, " Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." In the Hebrew it is, " In the Lord Jehovah is the Rock of ages."

The glory of God is subject to no changes nor vicissitudes, it will never cease to shine forth. History gives us an account of the sun's light failing, and becoming more faint and dim for many months together; but the glory of God will never be subject to fade. Of the light of that sun there never will be any eclipse or dimness, but it will shine eternally in its strength. Isa. ix. 19, " The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." So the love of God, to those who see his face, will never fail, or be subject to any abatement; he loves his saints with an everlasting love. Jer. xxxi. 3, " The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Those streams of pleasure which are at God's right hand are never dry, but ever flowing and ever full.

How much doth the sense of the sureness of this foundation confirm and heighten the joy ! The soul enjoys its delight in a sense of this, free from all fears and jealousies, and with an unspeakable quietness and assurance. Isa. xxxii. 17, " And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."

From this part of the subject we may derive several important and useful reflections.

1. Here we may see one instance wherein the revelation of Jesus Christ excels all human wisdom.

It was a thing that had been beyond the wisdom of the world, to tell wherein man's true happiness consisted; there was a vast variety of opinions about it among the wise men and philosophers of the heathen; indeed on no other subject was there so great a difference among them. If I remember right,

there were several hundred different opinions reckoned up respecting it, which shows that they were woefully in the dark. Though there were many very wise men among them, men famed through all succeeding ages for their knowledge and wisdom, yet their reason was not sufficient to find out man's true happiness.

We can give reasons for it now that it is revealed, and it seems so rational, that one would think the light of nature sufficient to discover it; but we have always lived in the enjoyment of gospel light, and being accustomed to it, are hardly sensible how dependent we are upon it, and how much we should be in the dark about things that now seem plain to us, if we never had had our reason assisted by revelation.

God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world by the gospel. 1 Cor. i. 20, " Where is the wise ? where is the scribe ? where is the disputer of the world ? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" *i. e.* he hath shown the foolishness of their wisdom by this brighter light of his revelation. For all that philosophy and human wisdom could do, it was the gospel that first taught the world wherein mankind's true blessedness consisted, and that taught them the way to attain to it.

2. Hence we learn the great privilege we have, who possess such advantages to come to the blessedness of seeing God.

We have the true God revealed to us in the word of God, who is the Being in the sight of whom this happiness is to be enjoyed. We have the glorious attributes and perfections of God declared to us. The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is discovered in the gospel, which we enjoy, his beauties and glories are there as it were pointed forth by God's own hand to our view; so that we have those means which God hath provided for our obtaining those beginnings of this sight of him which the saints have in this world, in that spiritual knowledge which they have of God, which is absolutely necessary in order to our having it perfectly in another world.

The knowledge which believers have of God and his glory, as appearing in the face of Christ, is the imperfect beginning of this heavenly sight, it is an earnest of it, it is the dawning of the heavenly light; and this beginning must evermore precede, or a perfect vision of God in heaven cannot be obtained; and all those that have this beginning, shall obtain that perfection also. Great therefore is our privilege that we have the means of this spiritual knowledge. We may in this world see God as in a glass darkly, in order to our seeing him hereafter face to face; and surely our privilege is very great, that he has given us that glass from whence God's glory is reflected. We have not only the discoveries of God's glory in the doctrines of his word, but we have abundant directions how to act, so that we may obtain a perfect and beatific sight of God; of one which we have in our text, and of which I will speak particularly hereafter.

3. This doctrine may lead us to a sense of the blessedness of the heavenly state, and justly cause us to long after it.

In heaven the saints do see God, they enjoy that vision of him, of which we have been speaking, in its perfection. All clouds and darkness are there removed, they there behold the glory and love of God more immediately, and with greater certainty, and a more strong and lively apprehension, than a man beholds his friend when he is with him, and sees his face by the noon-day sun, and with far greater advantages for conversation and enjoyment.

Well may this make the heavenly state appear a blessed state to us, and make us to breathe after it; well may the consideration of these things make the saints wait for and desire their happy change; well may it make them long for the appearing of Christ. This they know, that when he shall appear, they shall " see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2, " Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not

yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

This may well be comforting to the saints under the apprehensions of death, and it is a consideration sufficient to take away the sting of it, and uphold them while walking through the midst of that valley. This also may well comfort and uphold them in all troubles and difficulties they meet with here, that after a little while they shall see God; which will immediately dry up all tears, and drive away all sorrow and sighing, and expel forever every darksome thought from the heart.

4. Hence we learn that a life of holiness is the pleasantest life in this world,

because in such a life we have the imperfect beginnings of a blessed and endless sight of God; and so they have somewhat of true happiness while here, they have the seeds of blessedness sown in their souls, and they begin to shoot forth.

As for all others, those who do not live a holy life, they have nothing at all of true happiness, because they have nothing of the knowledge of God.

II. To be pure in heart is the certain and only way to attain to this blessedness.

We have shown what this seeing of God is, and have represented in some measure how great is the blessedness of so seeing him; and if what we have heard is believed and cordially received by us, it will be sufficient to awaken our attention to any instructions from the word of God that are to point out the way to us wherein we may attain to this blessedness.

If men should hear of some vast estate, or some rich hidden treasure, and at the same time should hear of some very feasible way in which they might make it all their own; how ready would they be to hear, with what eagerness would they listen to those who should bring such news and give them such directions, provided they had reason to believe that what was told them was true ! We are here told of a much truer and greater blessedness than any treasure of silver, and gold, and pearls can yield; and we are also told of the way whereby we may assuredly become the possessors of it, by him who certainly knows. I shall show,

1. What it is to be pure in heart.
2. That to be pure in heart is the sure way to gain this blessedness.
3. That it is the only way.

1. I shall inquire what is to be pure in heart.

Purity of heart is here to be understood in distinction from a mere external purity, or a purity of the outward actions and behaviour in those things that appear to men in an external morality, and an outward attendance on ordinances, and a profession of the true religion and pure doctrines, and a making an outward show and appearance of godliness.

Christ had very probably, in our text, an eye to the formality and hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, and other great saints, as they accounted themselves, and were accounted among the Jews. These were exceedingly exact in their observance of the ordinances of the ceremonial law, they were careful not to deviate from it in the least punctilio. For instance, how exact were they in observing the law of tithes; they were careful to bring the tenth of the herbs in their gardens, as mint, and anise, and cummin. They were very careful to keep themselves from all ceremonial uncleanness, and they

even added to the law in this particular; they were for being stricter and purer than the law required, and therefore made conscience of washing their hands before every meal. They were very strict to avoid conversing with the Samaritans; they would not eat with them, nor have any dealings with them, lest they should be defiled. They used to say to other nations, " Stand by thyself, come not nigh, for I am holier than thou." They looked upon themselves only as pure, because they were the children of Abraham, and because they were circumcised, and attended the ceremonial law; because they made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, and because of their external purity, they looked upon themselves as the peculiar favourites of heaven, and expected to be admitted to see God, when all the uncircumcised, and those that were not the children of Abraham, should be excluded.

But Christ corrects this their mistake, and teaches that such an external purity will never give a man a title to this blessedness, for it is purity of heart that is requisite in order to attain to it. Matt. v. 20, " For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

However exact any man may be in the external observance of moral, instituted duties, if he be careful to wrong no man, and can say, as the young Pharisee did, " All these have I kept from my youth," *i. e.*, as to an external observance, if he be very strict in keeping the Sabbath and in coming to the house of God, in attending family and secret prayer, yet if he has not holiness of heart, he is never like to see God. It is no reformation of manners that is sufficient, but there must be a new heart, and a right spirit. It is the heart that God requires. Prov. xxiii. 26, " My son, give me thine heart." It is he that looks at it. However fair and pure an outside there may be, that may be very pleasing to men, yet if there be not purity of heart, the man is not at all the more acceptable to God. 1 Sam. xvi. 7, " But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man look-eth on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." If men outwardly behave well and speak well, yet it is not accepted without trying and weighing the heart. Prov. xvi. 2, " All the ways of man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits." It is the spirit which is the subject of this blessedness of seeing God, and therefore the qualities of the spirit, and not so much those of the outward man, are regarded.

Now the heart is said to be pure in the sense of the text,

First. With respect to the spiritual defilement from which it is pure;

Secondly. With respect to certain positive qualities that it is endowed with.

The word *pure*, in its common acceptation, merely signifies something negative, viz., the absence of all mixture or defilement; but in pureness of heart, as it is used in Scripture, seems to be implied both something negative and positive, not only the absence or removal of defilement, but also positive qualities, that are called pure.

First. The heart is said to be pure with respect to the filthiness from which it is pure.

Sin is the greatest filthiness. There is nothing that can so defile and render so abominable. It is that which has an infinite abominableness in it; and indeed it is the only spiritual defilement; there is nothing else that can defile the soul. Now there are none in this life who are pure from sin in such a sense that there is no remainder, no mixture of sin. Prov. xx. 9, " Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" So that if this were the requisite qualification, none of the children of men would ever come to see God.

But the purity of heart with respect to sin, that may be obtained in this life, consists in the following things:

1st. It implies that the soul sees the filthiness that there is in sin, and accordingly abhors it.

Sin, that is so filthy in itself, is become so sensibly to the man whose heart is pure; he sees its odiousness and deformity, and it becomes nauseous to him.

To those animals which are of a filthy and impure nature, as swine and dogs, ravens and vermin, those things that are filthy and nauseous to mankind, do not seem at all disgusting; but on the contrary they love them, it is food that suits their appetites. It is because the} * are of an impure and filthy nature; the nature of the animal is agreeable to such things. So it is with men of impure hearts. They see no filthiness in sin, they do not nauseate it, it is in no way uncomfortable to them to have it hanging about them, they can wallow in it without any reluctance; yea, they take pleasure in it, it is their meat and their drink, because they are of an impure nature. But he who has become pure in heart hates sin; he has an antipathy to it; he does not love to be near it; if he sees any of it hanging about him, he abhors himself for it; he seems filthy to himself, he is a burden to himself, he abhors the very sight of it, and shuns the very appearance of it. If he sees sin in others, it is a very unpleasant sight to him; as sin. and as committed against God, it is grievous and uncomfortable to him wherever he discovers it. It is because his heart is changed, and God has given him a pure nature.

2d. It implies godly sorrow for sin.

The pure heart has not only respect to that spiritual filthiness that is present, to abhor it and shun it, but it has also respect to past sin. The consideration of that grieves it; it causes shame and sorrow to think that it ever rejoiced in such defilement, that it ever was so abominable as to love it and feed upon it. Every transgression leaves a filth behind it upon the soul, and this remaining filth occasions pain to the renewed and purified heart. By godly sorrow the heart exerts itself against the filthiness of past sins, and does, as it were, endeavour to cast it off, and purge itself from it.

3d. It implies that sin is mortified in the heart, so that it is free from the reigning power and dominion of it.

Though the heart is not perfectly free from all sin, yet a freedom is begun. Before, spiritual filth had the possession of the heart, corruption had the entire government of the soul, every faculty was so wholly defiled by it, that all its acts were filthy, and only filthy; the heart was entirely enslaved to sin.

But now the power of sin is broken, the strong bands by which it was tied and fastened to the heart are in a great measure loosed, so that corruption has no longer the possession and government of the heart as before. The principal seat, the throne of the heart, that was formerly possessed by corruption, is now purged, and filthiness does now as it were only possess the inferior and exterior parts of the soul. John xiii. 10, " He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet."

4th. The heart that is pure will be continually endeavouring to cleanse itself from all remaining filthiness.

Though there be remains of impurity, yet the new nature is so contrary to it that it will never rest or be quiet, but will always be cleansing itself: like a vessel of fermenting liquor, it will continue working, till it has worked itself clear, and cast off all the filth and sediment. Or like a stream of good water, if the water be in itself sweet and good, however it may be defiled from the muddy

banks, it will refine as it runs, and will run itself clear again, but the fountain that yields impure water will never cleanse itself. So he who is pure in heart will never suffer himself to live in any sin. If he be overtaken in a fault he will return and cleanse himself again by repentance, and reformation, and a more earnest care that he may avoid that sin for the future.

The remaining corruption that is in his heart will be his great and continual burden, and he will be endeavouring to cleanse himself more and more; he will not rest in any supposed degree of purity, so long as he sees any degree of impurity remaining, but he will be striving after progress in the mortification of sin and in the increase of holiness.

5th. The heart is said to be pure, especially with respect to its cleanness from, and opposition to, the lust of uncleanness

This kind of wickedness we find to be more especially called uncleanness and filthiness in Scripture; it brings a peculiar turpitude upon the soul, and defiles the temple of God. 1 Cor. iii. 17, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." Pureness in Scripture is sometimes used only in this restrained sense, with respect to freedom from fleshy impurities. So it seems to be, Philip, iv. 8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Now this sort of purity of heart is absolutely necessary in order to our coming to see God. There must be a renunciation of all impure and lascivious practices and conversation. They who live in the indulgence of such a lust in one kind of practice or another, or though it be only with their eyes or in their thoughts, are of impure hearts, and shall never come to see God unless they have new hearts given them.

They that have pure hearts, abhor and are afraid of such things. Jude 23. They take heed that they do not prostitute their souls to so much as mental and imaginary, much less to practical, impurities, and works of darkness.

Secondly. The heart is said to be pure, in respect to its being endowed with positive qualities, that are of a contrary nature to spiritual filthiness.

Though purity in strictness be only a freedom from filth, yet there are positive qualities of mind that seem to be implied in purity of heart; which may be reckoned a part of it, because of their contrariety to filthiness. The heart by reason of them is still more remote from defilement, as a greater light may be said to be purer than a lesser; for although the lesser light has no mixture of darkness, yet the greater light is still more remote from darkness.

1st. He is pure in heart, who delights in holy exercises.

Those exercises that are holy are natural and pleasant to him, he sees the beauty there is in holiness, and that beauty has such strong influence upon his heart that he is captivated thereby. He delights in the pure and holy exercise of love to God, in the fear of God, in praising and glorifying God, and in pure and holy love to men. He delights in holy thoughts and meditations. Those exercises of the understanding that are holy, are most agreeable to him, and those exercises of the will. Such inclinations, desires, and affections, are most delightful, which are spiritual and holy.

2d. He is pure in heart, who chooses and takes the greatest delight in spiritual enjoyment.

A spiritual appetite is that which governs in his soul, and carries him above the mean lust and defiled enjoyments of this world, towards spiritual and heavenly objects. The enjoyments which he chooses and chiefly desires, such as seeing God and enjoying communion with him, are enjoyments of the most refined and pure nature. He hungers and thirsts after the pure light of the New Jerusalem.

2. To be pure in heart is the sure way to obtain the blessedness of seeing God.

This is the divine road to the blissful and glorious presence of God, which, if we take it, will infallibly lead us thither.

God is the giver of the pure heart, and he gives it for this very end; that it may be prepared for the blessedness of seeing him. Thus we are taught in the Scriptures. The people of God are sanctified, and their hearts are made pure, that they may be prepared for glory, as vessels are prepared by the potter for the use he designs. They are elected from all eternity to eternal life, and have purity of heart given them, on purpose to fit them for that to which they are chosen. Rom. ix. 23, " And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared to glory."¹

We read of the church being arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, by which is signified the church's purity; and it was to fit it for the enjoyment of Christ. Rev. xix. 7, 8, " Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready; and to her was granted that he should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." And in the chap. xxi. verse 2, the church thus purified, is said to be as a bride adorned for her husband. " And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Therefore if God gives the pure heart to fit and prepare us for the vision of himself, he will obtain his own end; for who can prevent him from doing what he purposes ?

God also hath promised it. He hath given his faithful word for it in our text; and to the same purpose is Psal. xxiv. 3, 4, " Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord / and who shall stand in his holy place ? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." And again, Isa. xxxiii. 15—17, " He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly: he that despiseth the gain of oppression, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks: bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off."

3. This is the only way to come to this blessedness.

***First.* It is no way fit or suitable that those who have not pure hearts, should be admitted to this privilege.**

It would be most unsuitable for those who are all over defiled with the most loathsome filth, to be admitted into the glorious presence of the King of heaven and earth. It would not become the majesty of God, to allow those who are so abominable to come into his blessed presence; nor is it at all becoming his holiness, whereby he is of purer eyes than to behold such pollution.

It becomes persons when they come into the presence of a king, so to attire themselves, that they may not appear in a sordid habit, and it would be much more unsuitable still, for any to come all defiled with filth; but sin is that which renders the soul much more loathsome in the sight of God. This spiritual filth is of a nature most disagreeable to that pure, heavenly light; it would be most unsuitable

to have the pollution of sin and wickedness, and the light of glory, mixed together; and it is what God never will suffer. It would be a most unbecoming thing for such to be the objects of God's favour, and to see the love of God, and to receive the testimony of that love. It would be most unsuitable for the glorious and most blessed God to embrace in the arms of his love, that that is infinitely more filthy than a reptile.

Secondly. It is naturally impossible that the soul which is impure should see God.

The sight of God's glory, and impurity of heart, are not compatible in the same subject. Where spiritual defilement holds possession of the heart, it is impossible that the divine light which discovers God's glory should enter. How can he, who is under the power of enmity against God, and who only hates God, see his beauty and loveliness at the same time? Sin, so long as it has the government and possession of the soul, will blind the mind and maintain darkness. As long as sin keeps possession, the heart will be blinded through its deceitfulness.

Thirdly. If it were possible for them to see God, they could not find any blessedness in it.

What pleasure would it give to the soul that hates holiness, to see the holiness of God; what pleasure to them who are God's enemies, to see his greatness and glory? Wicked men have no relish for such intellectual, pure, and holy delights and enjoyments. As we have observed already, to have a relish for spiritual enjoyments, is one part of the purity of heart spoken of in the text.

Fourthly. It is impossible that such should be the objects of God's favour and complacence,

and therefore they cannot have this part of the blessed-making vision of God, viz., the seeing of his love. It is impossible that God should take pleasure in wickedness, or should have complacence in the wicked, and therefore they cannot have the blessed-making vision of God, for seeing the love of God is an essential part of it. If a man sees how glorious God is, and has not this consideration with it, that he has a property in this glory of God; if he cannot consider this glorious being as his friend; if he takes no pleasure in him, but, on the contrary, loathes and abhors him, the sight of God will be to him no blessedness.

Application

1. Hence we learn how great a thing it is to be an upright and sincere Christian;

for all such are pure in heart, and stand entitled to the blessedness of seeing the most high God. The time is coming when they shall assuredly see him; they shall see him who is infinitely greater than all the kings of the earth; they shall see him face to face, shall see as much of his glory and beauty as the eyes of their souls are capable of beholding. They shall not only see him for a few moments, or an hour, but they shall dwell in his presence, and shall sit down forever to drink in the rays of his glory. They shall see him invested in all his majesty, with smiles and love in his countenance; they shall see him, and converse with him, as their nearest and best friend.

Thus shall they see him soon. The intervening moments fly swiftly, the time is even at the door, when they shall be admitted to this blessedness.

2. Let the consideration of this subject put us all upon inquiring, whether we ourselves are pure in heart.

Is our religion of that kind which has its seat chiefly in the heart, or doth it chiefly consist in what is outward in morality and formality? Have we ever experienced a change of heart? have we a right spirit renewed within us? have we ever seen the odiousness and filthiness that there is in sin? is it what we hate, wherever we see it? and do we especially hate it in ourselves, and loathe ourselves for it? is it the object of our hatred as sin, and as it is against God?

And are there any that now hear me, who think themselves to be Christians, who do yet, either in their imaginations and thoughts, or in any secret practice, allow and indulge the lust of uncleanness, and live in such a way? If it be so, they had great need to bethink themselves whether or no they are not of that generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not cleansed from their filthiness. If they imagine that they are pure in heart, and live in such wickedness, their confidence is vain presumption. Inquire whether holy exercises and holy employments are the delight of your soul, and what you take pleasure in above all other things in which you can be engaged. Are the enjoyments that you choose, and take the greatest delight in, spiritual and heavenly enjoyments? Is the seeing of God, and conversing with him, and dwelling in his presence forever, what you should of your own accord choose above all other things?

3. I would earnestly exhort those who hear me, to make to themselves a pure heart.

Though it be God's work to give it, yet it is as truly your work to obtain it; though it be God's work to purify the heart, yet the actual, or rather the active, procuring of it is your act. All pure and holy exercises are man's acts, and they are his duty. Therefore we are commanded to make us a new heart, and a right spirit. Ezek. xviii. 31, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die?"

We must not think to excuse ourselves by saying that it is God's work, that we cannot purify our own hearts; for though it be God's work in one sense, yet it is equally our work in another. James iv. 8, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." If you do not engage in this work yourselves, and purify your own hearts, they never will be pure. If you do not get a pure heart, the blame of it will be laid to your own backwardness. The unclean soul hates to be purified; it is opposite to its nature; there is a great deal of self-denial in it. But be content to contradict the nature and bent of your own heart, that it may be purified; however grating it may be to you at first, yet consider how blessed the issue will be.

Though the road be a little rough in the beginning, yet it will grow pleasanter and pleasanter, till at last it will infallibly lead to that lightsome and glorious country, the inhabitants of which do see and converse with God. Prov. iv. 18, "But the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." If you would be in the way to have a pure heart,

1. Purify your hands; cleanse yourself from every external impurity of speech and behaviour; take heed that you never defile your hands in known wickedness; break off all your sins by righteousness; and take heed that you do not give way to impure lusts that would entice to sinful actions. If you set about the work of cleansing yourself, but when a temptation comes then plunge yourself into the mire again, you never will be likely to become pure; but you must be steady in your reformation and the amendment of your ways and doings.

2. Take heed you do not rest in external purity, but seek purity of heart in the ways of God's appointment; seek it in a constant and diligent attendance on all God's ordinances.

3. Be often searching your own heart, and seek and pray that you may see the filthiness of it. If ever you are made pure you must be brought to see that you are filthy; you must see the plague and pollution of your own heart.

4. Beg of God that he would give you his holy Spirit. It is the Spirit of God that purifies the soul. Therefore the Spirit of God is often compared to fire, and it is said to baptize with fire. He cleanses the heart, as fire cleanses the metals; and burns up the filth and pollution of the mind, and is therefore called the spirit of burning. Isa. iv. 4, " When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning."