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"LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER TO PROVOKE UNTO LOVE AND TO GOOD WORKS."—HEBREWS X. 24.

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DIVINITY.

PURITY OF HEART.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."—Matt. v. 8.

THE wickedness of men's lives proceeds from the depravity of their hearts; and, therefore, before the life can be pure, the heart must be cleansed. The heart, in an unconverted state, "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" but in a converted state, it is renewed in righteousness and true holiness, after the image of God. Real blessedness necessarily follows this great change. God, who before was hidden and unknown, is now seen, admired, and enjoyed. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Let us, first, make a few remarks upon purity of heart; and, secondly, consider the blessedness which results from it.

I. REMARKS UPON PURITY OF HEART.

Things are commonly said to be pure, when they are simple, unmixed, and unaccompanied with any other substance; and purity of heart, in this respect, implies sincerity and simplicity, as opposed to the base mixtures of hypocrisy and deceit. David inquires, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?" The answer is, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." Psalm xiv. 3, 4. Nathanael was a man of this character, as appears from the testimony of our Lord: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." John i. 47.

But purity of heart, understood in its full extent, implies that entire sanctification, by which the heart is cleansed from all evil, and filled with all good: Or a heart from which "all things are passed away," and "all things are become new." 2 Cor. v. 17. The understanding is enlightened; the will is subdued; and the affections are placed on proper objects. Sinful thoughts are banished; pride is destroyed; and the soul is clothed with humility. Furious passions are destroyed; and are succeeded by meekness and gentleness. An undue love of the world is rooted up; and the supreme love of God is planted in the mind. Murmuring and complaining are at an end; and contentment, in every state, is sweetly experienced. And, in short, the carnal mind is exchanged for the mind which was in Christ Jesus. It necessarily follows, that God is *all in all* to the pure in heart. They worship him in spirit and in truth; and constantly obey him with a willing mind. The tyranny of sin is at an end; and the government of God, which in every point of view is desirable, is begun in the soul. The constant language of one who is pure in heart is, "Not my will, but thine be done." Luke xvii. 42. Such a one may be tempted to evil; but temptation is not sin. He may feel many weaknesses, faults, and infirmities; but these are not sins. He feels nothing within contrary to the divine nature—for every principle in his heart leads him to God and heaven; so that *whether he eat or drink, or whatsoever he doth, it is all to the glory of God.* 1 Cor. x. 31.

Doubts have been entertained, even by the pious, whether such a state of purity can be attained on this side the grave. They forget, however, that if it be not attained before death, it cannot be attained afterwards; for there is no purgatory after death, to purify the polluted soul from its sins. To say it is wrought in death, is to say nothing at all; unless the phrase, in death, signi-

fies some intermediate state, between a mortal life and immortality: a thought which is so absurd as not to deserve a refutation. The plain fact is, that death ends this mortal life; and the moment we die, we enter upon an unchangeable state in the eternal world. This great work, then, must either precede death, or we never can be admitted into the unfiled kingdom of God. If it precede death an hour, why not a year? why not twenty years? why not *now*? Certainly God is both able and willing to cleanse us now; and if we are not cleansed, we may blame ourselves. Christ shed his precious blood to cleanse us from all sin; God expressly commands us to be holy; he has promised to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; inspired men have prayed for clean hearts; and our text pronounces the pure in heart blessed.

That we may attain purity of heart, let us feel the need of it; and use the means by which it may be attained. The principal means to be used are, prayer and faith. Prayer opens heaven. God condescendingly says to the needy sons of men, "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." Matt. vii. 7. But how can we expect this great blessing, if we never ask for it? Will God force it upon us? It discovers great goodness in him, to show us the need of purity: surely we shall not think it too much trouble to pray for the blessing. But let us pray earnestly, and persevere in prayer till we receive a gracious answer. Faith in Jesus is a necessary means of sanctification. Faith purifies the heart; and we are sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus. We trust in Jesus for pardon; let us trust in him for holiness. When we can do so, the Holy Spirit is given in his cleansing influences, and the work is accomplished.

II. THE BLESSEDNESS WHICH RESULTS FROM PURITY OF HEART.

The blessedness of purity far exceeds all that can be said upon the subject: it is better felt than it can be expressed. Of the pure in heart our text says, "They shall see God." This may imply two things, namely, that they shall have pleasing discoveries of God, and that they shall enjoy him as their God.

The discoveries of God, with which the pure in heart are favoured, refer both to this world and the next. In this world, they see him in all his wonderful works of creation, in all his varied providences, and in the pleasing dispensations of his grace. Before, they had neither eyes to see nor hearts to understand; but now, his wisdom, power, and goodness, meet their eyes in every direction; and while they see, they love, adore, and praise. In the next world, they shall see him face to face. All his glorious perfections will appear in a way unknown to mortals; and the sight will prove an everlasting source of blessedness.

A sight of God is accompanied with an enjoyment of God. To see, frequently signifies to enjoy. A bare discovery of his glorious works and perfections, unaccompanied with an enjoyment of him, would not make us blessed; but the sight and enjoyment being connected, our blessedness is great indeed! In whatever way we view God, we can claim him as our own. His wisdom directs our steps; his power protects us from danger, and helps us to do his will; his goodness supplies our wants; his mercy pardons our sins; his justice maintains our right; his purity is communicated to our hearts; and his glory is put upon us, so as to make us glorious.

What we now enjoy of God will be perfected hereafter. We shall enjoy him to all eternity. O blessed world! Let us hasten unto it! It is within our reach. The way to it is plain and open

to all. The foulest sinner on earth, by true repentance and a living faith, may become a pure and holy saint; and every saint on earth, by steady perseverance, may become a saint in heaven. In the present state of things, "we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: Now I know in part; but then shall I know, even as also I am known." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Holy Lord God, prepare us all for that world of purity and happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAN MAGNIFIED BY HIS MAKER.

We need not be shamed out of confidence in our Maker, by any instituted comparison with the vastness of inanimate nature, or be overwhelmed with a sense of our individual insignificance. Extend the limits of the material universe as we may—make every star a sun, and every sun the centre of an expansive system of secondary luminaries, sweeping the immeasurable spaces with their orbits; what is there in all this parade and pomp of amplification to lower, in the smallest possible degree, the sentiment, that God has put honour upon his offspring, or to weaken the delightful and reviving impression of the fact upon our minds? This universe of material things cannot think; no sensation thrills through any part of it; it is totally unconscious of itself. The sun knows not his own splendour, nor the lightnings their force, nor the air its refreshing qualities. The earthly world has no communion with God, nor God with it. It yields to his hand without perception; it obeys without a principle of choice. It was not made for its own sake, but for the sake of that very being who can think, and feel, and adore: the sun to warm, the earth to sustain and feed, the air to refresh him; it has beauty for his eye, an music for his ear, and grandeur to elevate and fill his spirit, and curious contrivances and phenomena of power and majesty, to lead his thoughts to the wondrous Artificer, and to prostrate his affections in his presence, under the weight of joy and awe. Let infidelity contemptuously display her planets, and their spacious sweeps; we show the being who enumerates the objects with which they are filled, marks their wondrous concatenation, and their series of secondary causes and effects, exults in their light, meditates in their darkness, measures their orbits, traces them in their courses, connects them all with God their Maker, makes them subservient to morals, religion, devotion, hope, and confidence, and takes up, at every new discovery, the song of the morning stars, the angel witnesses of the birth of material nature, who sang together when the laying of the foundations of the earth presented a new and heretofore unperceived manifestation of the wisdom, power, and bounty of the Godhead. Which, we ask, is the greater—the single being, whether man or angel, who sees, and knows, and admires, and is instructed by this dread magnificence of nature; or that nature itself, which knows neither that it is magnificent, nor that it exists at all? The argument is turned upon the objector, and the greatness of nature only proves the greatness of man.—*Rev. R. Watson.*

Will it avail any of us how near we get to heaven, if the door be shut before we arrive? How dreadful the thought, to have only *miss'd* being eternally saved! to aim well, and yet to permit the devil, the world, or the flesh, to hinder in the few last steps! Reader, watch and be sober.—*Dr. A. Clarke.*

A COMMON MIS-QUOTATION.—And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment to come.—See John xvi. 8. Acts xxvi. 25.