

promises. In Ps. xviii. 26, 'With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure'; and so in Ps. lxxiii. 1, 'Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart;' as if he should say, Let the world go which way it will, yet truly God is good to Israel, even to such as these are. A clean heart is worth a world, therefore go on you whose hearts the Lord hath begun to cleanse, and labour to get them clean more and more, and keep them clean. You that are holy be holy still; account it your riches, account it more than all the world that you have a clean heart. There is such a man it may be hath a greater estate, and is more brave in the world; but the more men and women have to do with the vanity of the world, the more their hearts are defiled. The Lord hath cut me short of those things, but blessed be his name, my heart in some measure is clean more than others. There are they that have greater parts than I, but many times there are very foul hearts that are joined with excellent parts. But though I cannot do what they can, yet my conscience testifies this to me, my heart is clean. Whenever I go to prayer, I can go into the presence of God with a clean heart. This should comfort thee against the want of any comforts whatsoever; this will keep thee from the defilements of the times wherein thou livest. In Ps. cxix. 1,

'Blessed are the undefiled in the way: they walk in the law of the Lord.' It is a blessed thing to be undefiled in our way, that is, when we live in the world and can keep ourselves cleansed from the pollutions of the world, unspotted in the world, can have our hearts clean. There be very few of us hath done so; but when we look back to the times wherein we lived before, the times wherein there were so great temptations to that that was evil, where is the man or woman but doth see cause to lament the defilements of their consciences and of their hearts by the pollutions of the times wherein they lived? We have sullied ourselves by superstitious vanities heretofore, and not only in our actions have been defiled, but in our very consciences, and just it were with the Lord that we should never come to see the good land that he is bringing his people unto, because we have so sullied ourselves by the superstitious vanities of the times wherein we lived. How happy is the man or woman that lived in former times wherein there were so many pollutions, that yet kept themselves undefiled in their way! I lost more, it may be, than others did, yet I kept my heart and conscience clean, and this is that that is the comfort of my soul. Blessed are such; the blessing of God is upon them, and shall certainly be upon them in a glorious manner.

SERMON XXV.

OR,

WHEREIN A PURE HEART IS BLESSED.

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

WE entered upon this sixth rule of blessedness the last day, and shall now proceed.

'Blessed are the pure in heart.' That spiritual cleanness of the soul of a man or woman is a very blessed thing. It is blessed,

First, If we consider the excellency of a man's soul. The more excellent a thing is, the more good there is in the keeping of it clean and pure from defilements; as now, if you have a piece of coarse cloth, you do not so much care to keep that clean as you do to keep fine lawn and cambric; it is worse for that to have a stain in it than for a piece of sackcloth to have a stain in it. Why the excellency of a man's soul is such as it is beyond all creatures that ever God made, ex-

cept the angels, all the works of nature, and therefore the cleanness of a man's soul, to be kept from stains and from filth, must needs be an excellent thing.

Secondly, and besides, in the second place, By the cleanness of a man's heart, a man comes to savour the word of God, to relish spiritual and heavenly truths. They are blessed that have clean hearts, for such, when they hear the word of God that is pure, when they hear the holy truths of God, oh how do their hearts relish them, and savour them, being clean! As the stomach when it is clean, it relishes and savours wholesome food; whereas, on the other side, when men have defiled their hearts, then

the most wholesome and the most blessed truths of God are sapless to them, they have no savour nor relish, and all because of the uncleanness of their hearts. Some of you may remember a time when you could relish and savour spiritual things better than now you can. Oh, examine your hearts! look into your hearts; you will find it is through the defilement of your hearts; you have defiled your consciences in some sin against conscience. You live in some secret haunt of evil, and no marvel though you cannot relish and savour the word as you were wont to do.

Thirdly, A clean heart makes one fit to draw near to God, to draw nigh to God in all duties of worship, and it commends all the duties of worship that any one performs: in James iv. 8, 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.' How will you draw nigh to God? 'Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.' Purify your hearts, ye double-minded, and thereby shall you be able to draw nigh to God. Men that have unclean hearts they dare not come nigh to God; or if they would, conscience cannot draw nigh to God. You may go into your closets sometimes, conscience putting you upon it; but when you are there you cannot draw nigh to God, your hearts are foul. But, therefore, purify your hearts, labour for cleansed hearts, and then, oh how will your heart spring in God's presence, and presently get nigh to him! It commends all services that we tender up to God. In Mal. iii. 3, there is a prophecy that Christ when he comes 'will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.' You come and offer many things to God, make many prayers to God, and think that God will save you for your good prayers; but certainly there is no offering that ever an impure heart did tender up to God, but it is defiled and loathsome before the Lord. But then is the offering of righteousness, when the Lord hath purified the heart. And in Prov. xxi. 8, 'As for the pure,' saith Solomon, 'his work is right.' The way of a man is froward and strange, but as for the pure his work is right. When the Lord hath cleansed the heart, though it may be there be much weakness, yet the work is right in God's eyes. 2 Tim. ii. 21, 'If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.' A purged vessel is a vessel sanctified and fit for the Master's use, and prepared for every good work; whereas those that have unclean spirits are like filthy, unclean vessels, unfit to be brought in to the presence of the Master. And therefore St Paul, speaking of the service that he did to God, it was 'out of a pure con-

science.' 2 Tim. i. 3, 'I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience,' saith the apostle. He was able to say this as in the presence of God—I endeavour to serve God, and do serve him, and it is from a pure conscience. 'Oh blessed are the pure in heart,' for they are fit to draw nigh to God, they are fit for every work that God shall employ them in. And it commends all the services that they do for God.

Fourthly, Again, a man that hath a pure heart, his life will be convincing before others. There is a great deal of beauty and excellency in grace, will appear in the conversation of that man or woman who keeps a clean heart towards God. There is an excellent scripture in Prov. xxii. 11, 'He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.' Oh that God would make good this word of his! that God would make the king the friend of Puritans. We know a time there was, that of all men in England, those that were called Puritans, and many of them who sought to worship God in purity, were looked upon by the eye of the king as the most odious in the land; yet there is this promise made, that 'He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.' God is able to make the king a friend to Puritans. To those that love pureness of heart, the pureness of their hearts will so guide them in their ways as to speak and to behave themselves in such a manner, that he shall be convinced in his conscience. These, certainly, are upright men. And others that have been about me, they have but flattered me, and deceived me, and led me into evil ways—into ways that have done abundance of mischief in the kingdom, whereby thousands have been oppressed, and their blood hath been shed. But I see these walk uprightly, according to their principles. I find that in one thing as well as in another they walk according to rule, and therefore I will be their friend. Oh let us pray that God would make good this promise! Certainly, if there be anything in the world to convince, it is a clean conversation out of a clean heart. Not that men only profess purity more than others, but that they walk answerably, and that they manifest the beauty and the excellency of a clean heart in their conversations before men. This will convince any in the world. Men may speak ill of them, and cry out of them, and say they are hypocrites. Well, let the world speak like the world; let them speak according to their own skill, as they have in the ways of religion. Do thou go on in the ways of holiness, still in a constant way, and let there be an evenness in thy conversation in one thing as well as another; manifest the purity of thy heart, and at length their consciences will tell them that thy ways are better than theirs. Thou wilt be honourable in the very consciences of those

that have cried out against thee. It is a mighty convincing thing purity of heart, when it shines forth in the life and conversation.

Fifthly, Again, Blessed are the pure, for all things are pure to them: Titus i. 15, 'Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.' Oh, thou hast a sanctified use of everything! hath God sanctified thy heart, and dost thou endeavour to sanctify the name of God in all thy ways; know that all things are sanctified to thee. And this one word it is worth a kingdom, worth a world, that all things should be made pure to those that are clean. And this the Lord saith, that thou hast a pure use, a sanctified use of everything, who labourest to keep thy heart clean before the Lord.

Sixthly, Further, Certainly those will hold out; They will never prove apostates that have clean hearts. Indeed, a man may make much profession, and be an apostate at last; but a man that hath a clean heart, and walks in sincerity before God, such a man will hold out. As it is with gold, gold that is of pure metal, put it into the fire and it will not consume. Indeed, if there be but only a gilding over, and the most that is in the thing is but dross—if it be put into the fire, it will there consume; but if it be pure gold, it will hold the fire. And so let the Lord cast his people into afflictions, into the fiery furnace; if indeed they be such as make profession to be his people, and have but an outside of holiness, there they will consume. But if they be men and women of clean hearts, they will hold out in their afflictions, they will hold out unto the end.

Seventhly, lastly, Purity of heart will make fruitful, fruitful in the ways of holiness, such who keep their hearts and consciences clean. Oh how will they grow up in the ways of holiness! they mightily thrive and grow: in John xv. 2, 'My Father purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit'—speaking of the vine. If there be any uncleanness got into thy heart, and the Lord, either by afflictions or any other way, shall purge thine heart, oh this is that that will make thee bring forth much fruit. As it is with children that are full of ill humours, they do not thrive and grow; but if you give them anything to purge out that ill humour, in a little time how will they thrive and shoot up and grow exceedingly. So it is with many of you; you do not thrive in the ways of religion; you do not grow up at all in godliness; you do not bring forth fruit to the glory of God. Oh, there is much uncleanness and filthiness got into your hearts; but if the Lord would please to purge you, by the renewing of the Spirit, and washing of the blood of Christ, and the renewing of the work of repentance, you would grow up in godliness, and

bring forth much fruit to the glory of God. Oh blessed are the pure in heart!

And therefore, my brethren, this point may comfort those whose consciences testify to them, that though there be many weaknesses, yet still their hearts do not mix with the time's evils. It is one thing for evil to be there, and to mix there. There may be dross, but not mixed with the heart; the heart mingles not with it. If thy conscience testify this, thou mayest have abundance of comfort from this point; and though some sin remains, yet this purity of heart may quiet thy spirits, even in the sense of many sins that are upon thee. In Isa. i. 16, 'Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil,' &c. Then in ver. 18, 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' When they are washed and made clean, they are then as white as snow, as wool; and now the Lord will reason with the soul. Thou mayest go reason with God, and God will reason with thee, when thou hast washed thee, and made thyself clean. And though there hath not only been sins, but like scarlet and crimson, though there be great sins, yet when thy heart doth not mix with these sins, when thou canst renew the act of faith and repentance, and thou canst appeal to God of thy sincerity and endeavours to walk with God in what purity thou art able. It is not the greatness of thy sins that thy conscience tells thee are through infirmity, that thou dost not give way to, that thou dost not entertain in thy heart, as that that is suitable to thee. The Lord will reason the case with thee, and thou mayest reason then the case with him. Blessed are the pure in heart. Oh labour to keep your hearts clean and pure, and therefore be daily watching over your hearts. Take heed that soil and filth do not get into your hearts, and be daily cleansing of them by the renewed work of faith and repentance; for though a Christian may keep his heart from being spotted with the gross sins of the world, yet there will dust get into thee every day. Oh labour to keep your hearts bright! Some of you love cleanness in everything, in all the furniture of your houses, your stools, tables, linen, in everything; you will not be satisfied that there is not a deal of dirt upon them, but if they be but any way sullied, you are not well pleased. Oh look thus unto your hearts! the Lord loves as it were a neat Christian, as I may so call it, that every day will be cleansing of his heart anew, and especially if you have been overcome with any sin, and so brought greater defilement upon your hearts, do not lie in that sin, never be at rest and peace with your souls till you have got that sin washed away in the blood of Christ, until you have got peace in your consciences in respect of that sin. I fear some of you

may have your consciences tell you that you have lain in some sins for a long time together. David had lain a long time in sin. Oh take heed of lying in any sin, but cleanse presently.

And lastly, because I would come to the promise, Oh how far are most of us from this cleanness of heart! and what infinite cause there is that shame and confusion of face should be among many of us! The Lord knows, and our consciences know, that there is woful uncleanness and filthiness in many of our hearts. Oh, what defiled consciences have many men and women in this place! It may be you are neat in your bodies, neat garments, clean linen; but oh, the filthy, nasty souls that you have within! God doth look upon your souls as filthy as a carrion that lies in a ditch. How canst thou come into the presence of God so as thou dost—so boldly, so presumptuously, when thou art conscious to thyself of such filthiness? Men of corrupt consciences, that have committed many acts of injustice, that have defiled their consciences many years together, yet they lie in it still, and never have made any restitution. Now, so long as thou hast got anything that is not thine own, and thou hast not restored it, all this while thy conscience hath been putrifying, and become more and more rotten; as long, I say, as thou continest in that sin without making restitution, if God doth anyway enable thee. And then the consciences of men are impure, abundance of sin conscience hath to charge them withal. If God should bid conscience speak, it would say, Lord, this sin was committed against my counsel and advice, and I shewed them to the contrary; and yet for all that, this and the other sin committed. And then the impurity of our hearts. Oh, what a filthy sty of uncleanness is the faculty of thinking in many men and women! In the thoughts of men's minds, there is the most abominable uncleanness, that one would wonder that an infinite holy God should be able to look upon such filthy creatures, and not come out against them in his wrath. The best of us all may find much uncleanness in our thoughts. Sometime, when thou hast been in the presence of God in prayer, how hast thou defiled thyself with unclean thoughts! How hast thou come into God's presence with a soul all-besmeared with filthiness, and come out of God's presence with a soul all-defiled with the abominable uncleanness of thy thoughts! And then the uncleanness of thy will and affections and desires. What desires hast thou had to sin, and so defiled thy soul! Oh, the faculties of men and women's souls are as filthy as any eye of unclean birds! And didst thou but understand what the infinite purity of God's nature means, and the infinite purity of God's law means, and then but understand what thy own heart is, thou wouldstst abhor thyself. Many of you thank

God you have good hearts. Oh, but it is because God is not known, and the holiness of his law is not known, and your own hearts are not known. Did you but know these three things, you would see cause, I say, to abhor yourselves. I put this to you, sometimes when you have been brought upon sick-beds, then, when you have come to see that you have had to deal with God, have you not had misgiving thoughts then? When you have been ready to go into the presence of the infinite holy God, then hath not your consciences reproved you for your uncleanness?—then hath not your consciences told you, how canst thou stand in the presence of this holy God? We read in the prophet Isaiah, though he were a holy man, a man that had much purity and cleanness in him, yet, because there was but some remainders of uncleanness—mark in Isa. vi.—when he had but a sight of God, the angels did but cry, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts,' &c. Then, in ver. 5, 'Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips,' (and certainly if of unclean lips, then he saw some uncleanness in the heart further.) 'for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' The sight of God did cause him to cry out, Woe to him, he was undone. Now, then, if so be that God should bring thee to have to deal immediately with him, oh the terror that thy conscience would bring upon thee. Those uncleannesses of thy heart, though they trouble thee not now, they may trouble thee one day. As we know it is in a chimney that is very foul, if the fire get into it, then it makes a flame, and it is hard to quench it; and so, when afflictions come upon men and women that have sooty hearts, filthy, unclean hearts, oh then afflictions are like to burn dreadfully. Ay, I do but appeal to your consciences in this: Suppose God should say, Well, all the congregation and men in the world shall know what uncleanness there is in every one of your hearts; they shall know all the unclean thoughts that ever you had, and all the unclean desires that ever you had, all the unclean secret workings of your hearts, it shall be known to the city and to all the world. Now would it not trouble you to think that God should turn your inside outward. Why, the infinite God he knows all; his piercing eye looks through and through; all that uncleanness of your hearts, they are before him as any actions that ever you have done. And consider this, especially you that make profession of holiness and purity, and yet God and your consciences tell you that you live in secret haunts of wickedness. Some servants that perhaps are false to their masters and governors, or are guilty of secret uncleanness, and that they might cover their uncleanness, will make great show of much forwardness in prayer and going to hear the word, and who would suspect these for falseness, for un-

cleanness, and so for others. Oh this is a most abominable thing, to have an unclean heart, and think to cover it by making a profession of religion! Thou dost take the name of God in vain in a most dreadful manner, and know that the wickedness of thy heart will find thee out. And just it is with God to leave thee to the wickedness of thy heart, to break into outward, actual sins. This is the curse of God upon hypocrites: they do maintain much secret wickedness in their hearts for a long time together, and the saints think well of them because of their profession. But this is the curse of God upon them: the Lord leaves them to the filthiness of their hearts, and lets them break out into some scandalous sins, to be a reproach upon them that shall never be blotted out. But we have now done with this part of the text. We come to the other part.

'For they shall see God.'

The world perhaps saith concerning these that are so pure and strict and nice, and dare not do anything against their consciences, they are poor, ignorant, silly people—silly, ignorant women, and the like. Well, as silly as they are, as ignorant as thou thinkest them to be in the matters of the world, yet they shall see God, they shall know God. Perhaps their knowledge is but weak in other things, but this is the promise, 'They shall see God,' they shall know him. Such as would walk in purity in the world, and dare not defile themselves so as others, they are subject to a great deal of wrongs in the world; the men of the world they will be too wise, too cunning for them. Well, though the men of the world do outgo them in cunning, because they have simple, plain hearts, yet this is their comfort, though I have not the cunning and craftiness to provide for myself in the world, but men in the world that have unclean hearts, that are full of cunning and craft, go beyond me, yet this is the blessing of God upon me, I shall see his face. 'They shall see God.'

See him: 'No man hath ever seen God'—that is, with bodily eyes. God is invisible; and you must not think that God hath any shape or fashion like man, or any creature: he is a spirit, an infinite simple being, and therefore cannot be seen with bodily eyes. But 'they shall see God'—that is, they shall know God by the eye of their understanding, and they shall come to enjoy God; for so 'seeing' is taken in Scripture. 'They shall see God,' they shall see him here in this world; and the more and more clean their hearts are, the more sight they shall have of God. And they shall see him hereafter in glory; for the more clear a glass is, the more bright will the beams of the sun be upon it when it shines. Take your ordinary glasses, as your thick green glass, when the sun shines upon that, it doth not make such a reflection as upon a clear crystal glass; or if there be

dirt upon the glass, the sun will not appear so bright and glorious; but take a bright and clear glass, and the sun will be very glorious indeed. So the hearts of men that are foul, there is no lustre of the glory of God upon them; but the hearts of men that are clean, God shines in his glory upon them, and there is a reflection of God's glory again upon their hearts. 'They shall see God,' saith Austin; 'oh most sweet light of minds that are cleansed!' He calls God the most sweet light of cleansed minds. Now before we come to the main promise of the sight of God, there is one or two notes that are very useful.

Observe, The first note is this, That according to the cleanness or uncleanness of men's spirits, so is their sight in reference unto God and the things of God. It arises from the connexion, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' I say, according to the cleanness or uncleanness of men's spirits, so is their understandings in reference to God and the things of God—that is, if men have clean spirits, then they will come to have higher understanding in spiritual things; if their hearts be unclean, then their spirits will not be able to have that right understanding in spiritual things: in Prov. ix. 10, 'And the knowledge of the holy is understanding.' Men that have holy hearts, if they come to know, they have understanding; and it is an excellent understanding that a man or woman hath of heaven and the things of God, that hath a holy heart. The knowledge of the holy is understanding; no man's knowledge is worthy the name of understanding, but the knowledge of the holy; if his heart be clean then his sight will be clean. And in Dan. ix. 13, there is a notable scripture that shews how our understanding of the things of God depend upon the cleanness of our hearts: 'That we might turn,' saith Daniel, 'from our iniquities, and understand thy truth;' as if he should say, So long as we live in our iniquities, and defile our souls by our iniquities, we shall never be able to understand thy truth. But when we come to turn from our iniquities, then our understandings will be clear, then we shall know God, and the things of God, in another manner than ever we knew them before. And in Dan. xii. 10, saith the text, 'Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried: but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.' When God purifies the heart, then he makes them to understand his ways; but none of the wicked shall understand God's mind; their hearts being unclean, they cannot come to understand the mind of God and the things of God. The understanding of man it hath a dye from the will and the affections, that, look, as the will and affections are, so there is, I say, a dye upon man's understanding, as it is in the body. Look how the

stomach is, and the distemper of divers diseases are, so there is a tincture upon the eye. The eyes of men by some kind of diseases are mightily infected by ill fumes that do arise from the stomach; so the eye of the soul is very much infected from the will and from the affections. As the body, when there ascends no ill vapours up to the eyes, the eyes are clear and are able to see; but now in some diseases where vapours do ascend up to the eyes, the eye is distempered and sees according to those vapours; so if the heart of man be clean, then it sees the truths of God plainly and clearly; but if the heart of man be unclean, then it is not able to see God nor the things of God.

Secondly, The will of man, it hath a great command over the understanding. The will of man, it is able to command the understanding, to work about such a work or about another, to turn away from this object or the other object; so that if the will of man and the affections are clean, then the will will put the understanding upon meditating on God and the things of God, of fastening the eye upon spiritual things. But now, if the heart be unclean, then it will turn away the understanding, it will not suffer the understanding of a man to fix itself upon God, or the things of God; those are objects unsuitable to an unclean heart. Or if at any time God himself shall present himself before a man or woman that hath an unclean heart, the heart will not suffer the eye of the understanding to think on God, but turns away from God to something else that is suitable to that uncleanness that is in the heart; therefore no marvel that they understand not the things of God, when their unclean spirits will not suffer the understanding to be acting upon that that should enlighten and convince them. But, on the other hand, if there be but any temptation presented that is suitable to the uncleanness of their hearts, then they presently fasten upon that, and the corrupt will and affections cause the understanding to work upon that altogether, and to think upon nothing but what will serve for the countenance and maintenance of that that is filthy and evil.

Thirdly, The Lord takes no delight at all to reveal himself to one that hath an unclean heart—a man or woman that hath a filthy, defiled conscience or heart, and so lies wallowing in filthiness. I say the Lord takes no delight or pleasure in revealing himself to such a one; for the Lord sees that such a one will reject the truth. Saith God, What! should I discover myself to such an unclean heart, that will abuse every truth that is presented to it! And therefore, in just judgment, the Lord will give them up to those things that shall rather be a means to harden their hearts in the ways of their uncleanness. There is a most dreadful scripture for that—for the Lord's not

taking delight to reveal himself to men of unclean spirits—in Ezek. xiv. 4, 'Therefore, saith the Lord, speak unto them, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh, according to the multitude of his idols.' This is a most dreadful scripture. If any one shall come to you that are my prophets, and setteth up his idols in his heart—there are some secret evils that he doth maintain in his heart—let be said what will, he will have his lusts in such and such evil ways. But he comes to inquire, and would know what the mind of God is. I will answer him, saith he, according to the idols that are in his heart; he shall have no other thing from me, but what shall be to harden him in his sin. He that will be filthy, he shall be filthy; and when he comes to hear the word, he shall hear nothing but what his corrupt heart shall gather to harden him in his sins.

And hence, here is the strange difference in men's apprehensions: when before they lived in uncleanness, and afterwards, when God comes to purge them, a man or woman that lived in unclean ways, why, they have come a hundred times to hear the word, and have heard the attributes of God opened to them, and heard the mysteries of Jesus Christ preached, and the glorious things of the kingdom of God; but they never saw any excellency in these things at all—never had any apprehensions of God to strike fear into them; it may be thirty, forty, fifty years they have been hearers, and these things went away as a mere sound. But now let this man, though he hath no more to improve his understanding than he had before—let God but come and purge his heart by some work of his Spirit, I say, then this man comes and hears the word, hears sermons of the glory of God opened to him; why, he sees God now in another manner than ever he saw him; he doth not hear any attribute of God but his heart is possessed with the fear of the glory of God, and now he wonders that all the world doth not fear God. I could before live many years together in ways of enmity against this God and never be troubled; why, now I would not for a thousand worlds be one hour in that condition I was in before, because I see it is such a dreadful thing to be but a moment in ways of enmity to God. Why, what is the matter with thee? Thou hearest the same truths that thou didst before. Ay, but now thine eyes are opened; when thou hearest of Jesus Christ, thou hearest and rejoicest at the riches of that glorious grace of God in Jesus Christ, and it is no new thing that you hear now. Ay, but now thine heart is cleansed, and thine eyes come to be opened; and a great deal of difference there is in the

apprehensions of one, when God hath been pleased to cleanse the heart, to what there was before. Here now you may see the ground of the great ignorance that there is in the world. It is not because the things of God are so hard to be understood, and that because they have no means to understand them, but because of the filthiness of their hearts. No marvel though men and women live under means, and hear sermons, but yet have not known what Jesus Christ hath meant, seeing their hearts are so filthy and unclean. In 2 Tim. iii. 7, you find there the apostle speaks of women that 'were ever learning, and never were able to come to the knowledge of the truth.' And so it may be applied to men—to those that are laden with sin, and led away with divers lusts, 'They are ever learning, and never able to come to the know-

ledge of the truth.' Why do they not come to the knowledge of the truth? Why, because they are led away with lusts, and laden with sins. When men and women have uncleanness in their hearts, and are laden with corruptions in their spirits, why, no marvel though they never come to the knowledge of the truth; and therefore do not think your ignorance can excuse you to say, 'Why, I do according to my knowledge, and all men cannot attain to the like knowledge as other men. Alas! I am a poor creature, and am but weak, and not able to understand things so as others do. Oh, it is not for want of the strength of thy understanding so much, but the filthiness of thy heart; those filthy steams that arise from thy corrupt heart, they darken the light of the truth, that it cannot shine into the understanding.'

SERMON XXVI.

OR,

THE UNCLEANNESS OF HEART CAUSE OF ERROR.

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

THE reason why there are such errors among us about God and his ways, it comes from the uncleanness of men's hearts. And mark it, either such men as heretofore have been professors of religion and fall off, and grow drossy and sensual and carnal, and give way to their lusts, they fall to strange opinions; or otherwise young ones, that have had very profane and unclean hearts, and as soon as ever their consciences begin to stir in them, why, they will make a kind of profession of religion, but their hearts never emptied of their lusts, never humbled for their sins; yea, and the devil hath got a way now to keep men from that, to tell them it is but mere legal, and it will rather hinder them from Jesus Christ than further them, and so they fall upon profession of religion, and never know any work of humiliation, so that their hearts are as unclean as ever they were. And no marvel though these men have such misshapen thoughts of God and Christ, and the covenant of grace, and the things of eternal life; their hearts were never cleansed. Yet I say, mark it, your erroneous men that fall to so many vile and damnable errors, they are of one of those two sorts, either men that have been forward professors, and beginning to be carnal and sensual

and vain; or otherwise young ones that take upon them the profession of religion, yet never knew what the sight of sin meant. These see not God; their hearts are so foul and vile, they cannot see God as God, nor the things of God in the true beauty and excellency of them. I will give you a scripture or two to shew you how errors do follow from the lusts of men's hearts, rather than from the mistakes of the head: 2 Tim. iii. 5, 8—that is, for those that are but formal professors of religion, they come to fall—'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,' saith the text. But what are they? 'As Jaanes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.' Men before described to have the form of godliness, but denying the power, that have made some profession of religion, and denied the power; saith the apostle, turn away from them; there is no meddling with such men. Then he tells what kind of dispositions they are of: they are those that resist the truth—men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith. And so others that are drawn aside by their own lusts: 2 Peter ii. 18, speaking of false teachers, 'For when they speak