Humility The Beauty of Holiness

Andrew Murray

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Lord Jesus! May our Holiness be perfect Humility!
Let Thy Perfect Humility be our Holiness!

Preface

There are three great motives that urge us to humility. Humility becomes me as a creature, as a sinner, and as a saint. The creature we can see in the heavenly hosts, in unfallen man, and in Jesus, the Son of Man. The sinner appeals to us in our fallen state, and points out the only way through which we can return to our right position as creatures. As saints, we have the mystery of grace, which teaches us that, as we lose ourselves in the overwhelming greatness of redeeming love, humility becomes to us the fulfillment of everlasting blessedness and adoration.

In our ordinary religious teaching, the aspect of the sinner has been emphasized too strongly, to the point that some have even gone to the extreme of thinking that we must keep sinning if we are to stay humble. Others seem to think that the strength of self-condemnation is the secret of humility. Because of this, the Christian life has suffered loss, where believers have not been distinctly guided to see that even in our relationship as creatures, nothing is more natural and beautiful and blessed than to be nothing, that God may be all. It is necessary to understand that it is not sin that humbles most, but grace. It is the soul, led through its sinfulness to be occupied with God in His wonderful glory as God, as Creator and Redeemer, that will truly take a position of submission before Him.

In these meditations I have, for more than one reason, almost exclusively directed attention to the humility that enhances us as creatures. It is not only that the connection between humility and sin is so prominent in all our religious teaching, but also because I believe that for the fullness of the Christian life, it is indispensable that emphasis be given to humility as it relates to us as creatures. If Jesus is indeed to be our example in His lowliness, we need to understand the principles in which humility was rooted. We must find the common ground on which we stand with Him, and in which our likeness to Him is attained. If we are indeed to be humble, not only before God but also towards men, if humility is to be our joy, we must see that it is not only the mark of shame because of sin, but it is also apart from all sin in being clothed with the very beauty and blessedness of heaven and of Jesus. We will see that Jesus found His glory in taking the form of a servant. So when He said to us, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your slave (Matthew 20:27), He simply taught us the blessed truth that there is nothing so heavenly as being the servant and helper of all. The faithful servant, who recognizes his position, finds a real pleasure in supplying the wants of the master or his guests. When we see that humility is something infinitely deeper than regret, and accept it as our participation in the life of Jesus, we will begin to learn that it is our true goodness. We will understand that to prove it by being servants of all is the highest fulfillment of our destiny as men created in the image of God.

When I look back on my own religious experience, or on the church of Christ in the world, I stand amazed at how little humility is desired as the distinguishing feature of the discipleship of Jesus. In preaching and living, in the daily communication of the home and social life, in the special fellowship with Christians, in the direction and performance of work for Christ, there is overwhelming proof that humility is not considered the overriding virtue, the only root from which the graces can grow, the one indispensable condition of true fellowship with Jesus. It should be impossible for men to say they seek higher holiness unless their claim is accompanied by increasing humility. This is a loud call to all committed Christians to prove that meekness [1] and lowliness of heart are the evidence by which they who follow the meek and lowly Lamb of God

are to be known.

[1] A closer look at the word meek : The Greeks called their horses praüs , or meek . When the horse got to the level of training where it would obey the master (the rider) no matter what was going on, it could be trusted in the heat of battle not to do something stupid or foolish. Once the rider knew that he could trust the animal, and it would obey him no matter what, he called it a meek horse even though it might be a powerful, thoroughbred stallion, capable of killing enemies in the battle.

I

Humility: The Glory of the Creature

> Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and virtue; for thou hast created all things, and by thy will they have their being and were created (Revelation 4:11).

When God created the universe, it was for the single purpose of making the creature a partaker of His perfection and blessedness, and through that, showing the glory of His love, wisdom, and power. God wished to reveal Himself in and through created beings by communicating to them as much of His own goodness and glory as they were capable of receiving. But this communication didn't give the creature something which it could possess in itself – a certain life or goodness, which it had under its own control. By no means. However, as God is the ever-living, ever-present, ever-acting One who upholds all things by the word of His power, and in whom all things exist, the relationship of the creature to God could only be one of unceasing, absolute, and universal dependence. As God by His power once created, so by that same power God maintains every moment. The creature looks back to the origin and first beginning of existence, and acknowledges that it owes everything to God. In addition to this, the creature must accept that its main concern, its best asset, its only happiness, now and through all eternity, is to present itself an empty vessel in which God can dwell and demonstrate His power and goodness.

The life God gives is not all at once, but moment by moment, through the unceasing operation of His mighty power. Humility, the place of entire dependence on God, is the first duty of the creature, and the root of every good quality.

Likewise, pride, or the loss of this humility, is the root of every sin and evil. It was when the Serpent breathed the poison of his pride – the desire to be as God – into the hearts of Adam and Eve, that they fell from their high position into all the wretchedness in which mankind is now sunk. In heaven and earth, pride is the gate, the birth, and the curse of hell. (See Note A.)

Therefore, it is reasonable to say that nothing can be our redemption except the restoration of the lost humility, the original and only true relationship of the creature to its God. So Jesus came to bring humility back to earth, to make us sharers in it, and by it, to save us. In heaven, He humbled Himself to become man. The humility we see in Him possessed Him in heaven; it brought Him, and He brought it, from there. Here on earth, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death (Philippians 2:8). His humility gave His death its value, and became our redemption. Now, the salvation He makes known is nothing less and nothing else than a communication of His own life and death, His own nature and attitude, His own humility, as the ground and root of His relationship to God and His redeeming work. Jesus Christ took the place and fulfilled the destiny of man, as a creature, by His life of perfect humility. His humility is our salvation. His salvation is our humility.

Because of this, the life of the saved ones, of the saints, must bear this stamp of deliverance from sin and full restoration to their original state. Their whole relationship to God and man is

made visible by a penetrating humility. Without humility, there can be no true dwelling in God's presence or enjoying His favor and the power of His Spirit. Without humility, there is no faith, love, joy, or strength demonstrated in our lives. Humility is the only soil in which the graces take root; the lack of humility is the reasonable explanation for every defect and failure in the Christian life. Humility is not so much a blessing or attribute along with others; it is the root of all. It alone takes the right attitude before God, and allows Him to sanctify.

God has created us as reasonable beings, so that when we are convicted by the truth we will be ready to obey. The call to humility has been largely ignored in the church, because its true nature and importance has not been understood. It is not a thing which we bring to God, or He gives. Humility is simply the sense of entire nothingness, which comes when we see how truly God is all, and in which we make way for God to be all. When the creature realizes that this is true goodness, and consents to be the vessel in which the life and glory of God are to work and exhibit themselves, he sees that humility is simply acknowledging the truth of his position as the creature, and yielding to God His rightful place.

In the life of committed Christians, of those who pursue and profess holiness, humility ought to be the evidence of their righteousness. It is often said that this is not so. Couldn't one reason be that in the teaching and example of the church, it has never been placed in its position of supreme importance? This is due to the neglect of this truth, that as strong as sin is as a motive to humility, there is a motive of broader and mightier influence. That which makes the angels, Jesus, and the holiest of saints in heaven so humble, is the first and most important element of the relationship of the creature. It is the humility and nothingness which leaves God free to be all.

I am sure there are many Christians who will confess that their experience has been very much like my own in this, that we had long known the Lord, without realizing that meekness and lowliness of heart are supposed to be the distinguishing features of the disciple as they were of the Master. This humility is not a thing that will come of itself, but it must be made the object of special desire, prayer, faith, and practice. As we study the Word, we will see what very distinct and often repeated instructions Jesus gave His disciples on this point, and how slow they were in understanding Him. Let us, at the very beginning of our meditations, admit that there is nothing so natural to man, nothing so subtle and hidden from our sight, nothing so difficult and dangerous, as pride. Let us feel that nothing but a very determined and persevering waiting on God and Christ will discover how lacking we are in the grace of humility, and how inadequate we are to obtain what we seek. Let us study the character of Christ until our souls are filled with the love and admiration of His lowliness. And let us believe that, when we are broken down under a sense of our pride and our inability to cast it out, Jesus Christ Himself will come in to impart this grace too, as a part of His wondrous life within us.

II

Humility: The Secret of Redemption

> Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, made in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:5-7).

No tree can grow except on the root from which it sprang. Through all its existence it can only live with the life that was in the seed that gave it being. The full understanding of this truth in its application to the first and the second Adam help us greatly to grasp both the need and the nature of the redemption there is in Jesus.

The Need . When the old Serpent, he who had been cast out of heaven for his pride, whose whole nature was pride, spoke his words of temptation into the ear of Eve, these words carried with them the very poison of hell. When she listened, and yielded her desire and her will to the prospect of being as God, knowing good and evil, the poison entered into her soul, blood, and life. This destroyed forever that blessed humility and dependence upon God, which would have been our everlasting happiness. Instead of this, her life and the life of the race that sprang from her became corrupted to its very root with the most terrible of all sins and curses – the poison of Satan's own pride. All the misery of which this world has been the stage, all its wars and bloodshed among the nations, its selfishness and suffering, all its ambitions and jealousies, its broken hearts and embittered lives, and all its daily unhappiness, have their origin in what this cursed, hellish pride, either our own or that of others, has brought us. It is pride that made redemption necessary. Most of all, it is from our pride that we need to be redeemed. Our awareness of the need for redemption will largely depend on our knowledge of the terrible nature of the power of pride that has entered our being.

No tree can grow except on the root from which it sprang. The power Satan brought from hell, and into man's life, is working daily, hourly, and with mighty power throughout the world. Men suffer from it. They fear, fight, and flee it, yet they don't know where it comes from or where it derives its power. No wonder they do not know where or how it is to be overcome. Pride has its root and strength in a terrible spiritual power, outside of us as well as within us. As necessary as it is that we confess and deplore it as our very own, it is essential to know its satanic origin. If this leads us to utter despair of ever conquering or casting it out, it will lead us more quickly to the supernatural power of the redemption of the Lamb of God, in which alone our deliverance is to be found. The hopeless struggle against the demonstration of self and pride within us may become still more hopeless as we think of the power of darkness behind it all. Utter despair will prepare us realize and accept a power and a life outside of ourselves, the humility of heaven as brought near by the Lamb of God, to cast out Satan and his pride.

No tree can grow except on the root from which it sprang. Even as we need to look to the first Adam and his fall to know the power of the sin of pride within us, we need to experience the second Adam and His power to form within us a life of humility as real, abiding, and conquering

as that of pride. We have our life from and in Christ, more truly than from and in Adam. We are to walk, holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, fed and united by its joints and bonds, grows in the increase of God (Colossians 2:19). The life of God, which in Jesus Christ entered human nature, is the root in which we are to stand and grow. It is the same almighty power that worked when Jesus Christ entered human nature, and then onward to the resurrection, which works daily in us. Our one need is to study, know, and trust the life that has been revealed in Christ as the life that is now ours, and waits for our willingness to submit in order to gain possession and mastery of our whole being.

In this view, it is of incredible importance that we should have correct and accurate thoughts of who Christ is, what really makes Him the Christ, and especially what may be considered His chief characteristic, the root and essence of all His character as our Redeemer. There can only be one answer: it is His humility. What is the incarnation but His heavenly humility, His emptying Himself and becoming man. What is His life on earth but humility, His taking the form of a servant. What is His atonement but humility. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death . What is His ascension and His glory, but humility exalted to the throne and crowned with glory. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death . Therefore, God also has highly exalted him (Philippians 2:8-9). In heaven, where He was with the Father, in His birth, His life, His death, and in His sitting on the throne, it is all nothing but humility. Christ is the humility of God embodied in human nature. He is eternal love humbling itself, clothing itself in the garb of meekness and gentleness, to win, serve, and save us. As the love and superiority of God makes Him the protector, helper, and servant of all, it was necessary for Jesus to become incarnate humility. He is still in the midst of the throne, the meek and lowly Lamb of God.

If humility is the root of the tree, its nature must be seen in every branch, leaf, and fruit. If it is the first, the all-including grace of the life of Jesus, if it is the secret of His atonement, then the health and strength of our spiritual life will entirely depend on our putting this grace first too. We must make humility the chief thing we admire in Him, the chief thing we ask of Him, and the one thing for which we sacrifice all else. (See Note B.)

Is it any wonder that the Christian life is so often feeble and fruitless, when the very root of our life in Christ is neglected and unknown? Is it any wonder that the joy of salvation is felt so little, when the humility in which Christ found joy and brings it to us, is so rarely desired? Until a humility which will rest in nothing less than the end and death of self; which gives up all the honor of men as Jesus did, to seek the honor that comes from God alone; which absolutely makes and counts itself nothing, that God may be all, that the Lord alone may be exalted, until such a humility is what we seek in Christ above our most important joy, and welcome at any price, there is very little hope of a religion that will conquer the world.

I cannot plead strongly enough with my reader, if his attention has never been specifically directed to the need for humility within him or around him, to pause and ask whether he sees very much of the spirit of the meek and lowly Lamb of God in those who are called by His name. Let him consider how all lack of love; all disregard for the needs, feelings, and weakness of others; all sharp and hasty judgments and words, so often excused under the plea of being outright and honest; all manifestations of temper, touchiness, and irritation; all feelings of bitterness and estrangement, have their root in nothing but pride, that only seeks itself. Will he open his eyes to see how a dark and devilish pride creeps in almost everywhere? Even the church assemblies of the saints are not exempt. Let him begin to ask what would happen, if in himself, around him, towards fellow saints, and the world, believers were really permanently guided by the humility of Jesus. Let him acknowledge that the cry of our whole heart, night and day, should be for the humility of Jesus in ourself and all around us! Let him honestly fix his heart on his own lack of the humility which has been revealed in the likeness of Christ's life and in the whole character of His redemption, and he will begin to feel as if he had not yet fully

known Christ and His salvation.

Believer, study the humility of Jesus! This is the secret, the hidden root of your deliverance. Sink down into it deeper day by day. Believe with your whole heart that this Christ, whom God has given you, will enter in to live and work within you too, in order to make you into what the Father would have you to be.

III

The Humanity of Jesus

I am among you as he that serves (Luke 22:27).

In the gospel of John, we have the inner life of our Lord laid open to us. Jesus speaks frequently of His relationship to the Father, the motives by which He is guided, and His knowledge of the power and spirit in which He acts. Though the word humble does not occur, there is no other place in Scripture where we see His humility so clearly. We have already said that this attribute is nothing more than the simple consent of the creature to let God be all, in which the creature surrenders itself to His working alone. In Jesus we will see how both as the Son of God in heaven and as man upon earth, He took the place of total servitude, and gave God the honor and the glory which is due Him. What He taught about humility was made true in Himself: He that humbles himself shall be exalted. As it is written, He humbled Himself, Therefore, God also has highly exalted him .

Listen to the words in which our Lord speaks of His relationship to the Father, and notice how often He uses the words not and nothing , of Himself. The not I, in which Paul expresses his relationship to Christ, is the very spirit of what Christ says of His relationship to the Father.

The Son can do nothing of himself (John 5:19).

I can of my own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek not my own will (John 5:30) .

I do not receive glory from men (John 5:41).

For I came down from the heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me (John 6:38).

My doctrine is not mine (John 7:16).

I have not come of myself (John 7:28).

I do nothing of myself (John 8:28).

Neither did I come of myself, but he sent me (John 8:42).

I seek not my own glory (John 8:50).

The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself (John 14:10).

The word which ye have heard is not mine (John 14:24).

These words open to us the deepest roots of Christ's life and work. They tell us how it was possible for the almighty God to work His mighty redemptive work through Christ. They show what Christ considered the state of His heart in His position as the Son of the Father. They teach us what the essential nature and life is, which Christ accomplished and now communicates through His Word. It is this: He was nothing, that God might be all. He submitted Himself with His will and His powers entirely for the Father to work in Him. Of His own power,

His own will, and His own glory, He did not consider Himself, but gave Himself completely to the Father. Of His whole mission with all His works and His teaching, of all this He said, "I am nothing, the Father is all."

This life of entire self-denial, of absolute submission and dependence upon the Father's will, Christ found to be one of perfect peace and joy. He lost nothing by giving all to God. God honored His trust, did all for Him, and then exalted Him to His own right hand in glory. Because Christ humbled Himself in this way before God, and sought God in all things, He found it possible to humble Himself before men too, and to be the servant of all. His humility was simply the surrender of Himself to God, to allow God to do in Him what He pleased. It didn't matter to Him what men might say about Him or do to Him.

It is in this state of mind, in this spirit and disposition, that the redemption of Christ has its value and effectiveness. The very reason we are made partakers of Christ is to bring us to this disposition. This is the true self-denial to which our Savior calls us, the acknowledgment that self has nothing good in it, except as an empty vessel which God must fill. Its claim to be or do anything may not for a moment be allowed. It is in this, above and before everything, in which the conformity to Jesus exists, the being and doing nothing of ourselves, that God may be all.

Here we have the root and nature of true humility. It is because this is not understood nor pursued, that our humility is so superficial and feeble. We must learn from Jesus, how He is meek and lowly of heart. He teaches us where true humility takes its proper place and finds its strength. This happens when we take hold of the knowledge that it is God who works all in all, that our responsibility is to yield to Him in perfect surrender and dependence, in full compliance to be and to do nothing of ourselves. Christ came to reveal and pass on a life to God that came through death to sin and self. If we feel this life is too difficult for us and beyond our reach, it must motivate us even more to seek it in Him. It is the indwelling Christ who will live in us this life, meek and lowly. If we long for this, let us above everything, seek the holy secret of the knowledge of the nature of God. The secret which all of nature, every creature, and every child of God is to be the witness, is the realization that it is nothing but a vessel, a channel, through which the living God can manifest the riches of His wisdom, power, and goodness. The root of all goodness and grace, of all faith and acceptable worship, is that we know we have nothing but what we receive, and bow in deepest humility to wait upon God for it .

This humility was not simply a fleeting thought, wakened up and exercised when He thought of God, but the very expression of His whole life. Jesus was just as humble in His relationship with men as with God. He considered Himself to be the servant of God for the men whom God made and loved. As a natural consequence, He considered Himself to be the servant of men, that through Him God might do His work of love. He never for a moment thought to seek His own honor, or declare His power to defend Himself. His whole attitude was that of a life yielded to God. It is not until Christians study the humility of Jesus as the very essence of His redemption, as the only true relationship to the Father, that the terrible lack of actual, heavenly humility will become a burden and a sorrow. Our ordinary religion must be set aside and we must receive humility from Jesus. This humility is evidence of Christ within us.

Brothers and sisters, are you clothed with humility? Ask your daily life. Ask Jesus. Ask your friends. Ask the world. Begin to praise God that there is opened up to you, in Jesus, a heavenly humility of which you have hardly known, a humility through which blessings you possibly have never yet experienced can come in to you.

IV

Humility in the Teaching of Jesus

> Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart (Matthew 11:29). Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your slave (Matthew 20:27).

We have seen humility in the life of Christ, as He laid open His heart to us. Let us listen to His teaching. There we will hear how He speaks of humility, and how He expects men and His disciples to be humble, as He was. Let us carefully study these passages to receive the full impression of how often and how earnestly He taught about humility. It may help us realize what He asks of us.

Look at the beginning of His ministry. In the Beatitudes, with which the Sermon on the Mount opens, Scripture reads, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:3, 5). The very first words of His proclamation of the kingdom of heaven reveal the open gate through which we enter. The poor, who have nothing in themselves, to them comes the kingdom. The meek, who seek nothing in themselves, will inherit the earth. The blessings of heaven and earth are for the lowly. For the heavenly and the earthly life, humility is the secret of blessing.

Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:29). Jesus offers Himself as teacher. He tells us what the Spirit is and what we can learn and receive from Him. We will find these things in Him as teacher. Meekness and lowliness is what He offers us. In this, we will find perfect rest for our souls. Humility will be our salvation.

The disciples had been disputing who would be the greatest in the kingdom, and had agreed to ask the Master (Luke 9:46; Matthew 18:3). He set a child in their midst, and said, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens. Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? The question is indeed a far-reaching one. What will be the primary differentiating feature in the heavenly kingdom? The answer was one that no one but Jesus would have given. The top honor of heaven, the true heavenly mindedness, the most precious of the virtues, is humility. He that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

The sons of Zebedee asked Jesus for the honor to sit on His right hand and His left, the most prestigious places in the kingdom. Jesus said it was not His to give, but the Father's, who would give it to those for whom it was prepared. They must not look or ask for it. Their thought must be of the cup and the baptism of humiliation. And then He added, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your slave, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:27-28). Humility will be the one standard of glory in heaven. As Christ demonstrated in His life, so the lowliest is nearest to God. The authority in the church is promised to the humblest.

Speaking to the multitude and the disciples regarding the Pharisees and their love of the highest positions, Christ said once again, But h e that is greatest among you shall be your

servant (Matthew 23:11). Humiliation is the only ladder to honor in God's kingdom.

On another occasion, in the house of a Pharisee, He spoke the parable of the guest who would be invited to move to a higher position at the table (Luke 14:7-11). He added, For whosoever exalts himself shall be abased, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted (Luke 14:11). The demand is inescapable; there is no other way. Submission alone will be exalted.

After the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, Christ spoke again: Anyone that exalts himself shall be humbled, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted (Luke 18:14). In our total relationship to God, everything is worthless that is not affected strongly by deep, true humility towards God and men.

After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus said, If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet (John 13:14). Every thought, either of obedience or conformity, makes humility the first and most essential element of discipleship.

At the Holy Supper table, the disciples still disputed who should be greatest. Jesus said , he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is prince, as he that doth serve (Luke 22:26). The path Jesus walked and opened up for us, the power in which He brought about salvation and saves us, it is because of His humility in these things that makes me the servant of all.

How little this is preached. How little it is practiced. How little the lack of it is felt or confessed. Sadly, few pursue some recognizable measure of likeness to Jesus in His humility. Few ever think of making it a specific object of continual desire or prayer. How little the world has seen it, even within the inner circle of the church.

Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your slave (Matthew 20:27). How exciting it would be if we could truly believe that Jesus means this for us! We all know what the character of a faithful servant or slave implies: devotion to the master's interests, thoughtful study and care to please him, and delight in his prosperity, honor, and happiness. There are servants on earth in whom these attributes have been seen, and to whom the name of servant has never been anything but a glory. To how many of us has it not been a realized joy in our Christian life to know that we have the ability to yield ourselves as servants, as slaves to God? That we can find that His service is our highest liberty, the freedom from sin and self? Now is the time to learn another lesson: that Jesus calls us to be servants of one another. As we accept this lesson heartily, our service will be a true blessing, a new and fuller freedom from sin and self. At first, it may appear difficult. This is only because of the pride that still considers itself something. If we learn that to be nothing before God is the glory of the creature, we will welcome with our whole heart the discipline we may have in serving even those who annoy or irritate us. When our own heart is intent on this true sanctification, we will study each word of Jesus on humility with new passion. No place will be too low, no stooping too deep, and no service too miserable or lengthy, if we simply have the opportunity to share and experience the fellowship with Him who spoke, I am among you as he that serves (Luke 22:27).

Brethren, here is the path to the higher life. Down, lower down! This was what Jesus repeatedly said to the disciples who were thinking of being great in the kingdom, and of sitting on His right hand and His left. Do not seek or ask for a position of honor; that is God's work. Your work is to submit and humble yourselves and take no place before God or man, but that of a servant. That is your work. Let that be your one purpose and prayer. God is faithful. Just as water always seeks and fills the lowest place, so the moment God finds the creature humble and empty, His glory and power flow in to raise up and bless. To humble ourselves must be our single concern. That we will be exalted is God's concern. By His mighty power and in His great love He will do it.

Men sometimes speak as if humility and meekness would rob us of what is dignified, bold, and manlike. Oh, if only all would believe that it is Godlike to humble oneself to become servant

of all! This is the nobility of the kingdom of heaven, and the royal spirit that the King of heaven displayed. This is the path to the gladness and glory of Christ's presence dwelling in us.

Jesus, the meek and lowly One, calls us to learn from Him the path to God. Let us study the words we have been reading, until our hearts are filled with the thought: My one need is humility. Let us believe that what He shows, He gives, and what He is, He communicates. As the meek and lowly One, He will come in and dwell in the longing heart.

V

Humility in the Disciples of Jesus

He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is prince, as he that doth serve (Luke 22:26).

We have studied humility in the person and teaching of Jesus. Let us now look for humility in the circle of His chosen companions: the twelve apostles. If we find a lack of it in them, the contrast between Christ and men will be seen more clearly. It will help us appreciate the mighty change which Pentecost brought about in them, and prove how real our participation can be in the perfect triumph of Christ's humility over the pride Satan has breathed into man.

In the texts quoted from the teaching of Jesus, we have already seen the instances where the disciples proved how totally lacking they were in the attribute of humility. Once, as they were walking, they disputed over which of them should be the greatest. Another time, the sons of Zebedee, with their mother, asked for the seat on the right hand and the left of Jesus in His kingdom. Later, at the Holy Supper table on the last night, there was again a dispute over which of them should be considered greatest. Not that there weren't moments when they humbled themselves before their Lord. So it was with Peter when he cried out, Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man (Luke 5:8). Similarly, the disciples fell down and worshipped Him after He stilled the storm. However, such occasional expressions of humility only bring into stronger contrast the habitual tone of their mind and the position and power of self. The study of the meaning of all this will teach us some very important lessons.

First, there may be significant heartfelt and active religion while humility is still sadly lacking. We see this characteristic in the disciples. They had an intense attachment to Jesus. They had forsaken all for Him. The Father had revealed to them that Jesus was the Christ of God. They believed in Him, loved Him, and obeyed His commandments. They had forsaken all to follow Him. When others went back, they stood with Him. They were ready to die with Him. But deeper down than all of this there was a dark power, a lack of clarity. They were not aware of the existence and the hideousness that had to be slain and cast out before they could be the witnesses of the power of Jesus to save. This is still the case. We may find professors and ministers, evangelists and workers, missionaries and teachers, in whom the gifts of the Spirit are many and manifest. These are the channels of blessing to multitudes, but when the time of testing comes, or more accurate teaching gives fuller knowledge, it is only too painfully manifest that the attribute of humility is seldom seen. All of this confirms the lesson that humility is one of the most critical attributes, one of the most difficult to attain. Humility should be the primary focus of our efforts. However, it must be fully understood that humility only comes in power when the fullness of the Spirit makes us partakers of the indwelling Christ.

Second, all external teaching and personal effort is ineffective to conquer pride or produce the meek and lowly heart. For three years, the disciples were in the training school of Jesus. He told them the chief lesson He desired to teach them was to learn of me, for I am meek and

humble of heart (Matthew 11:29). Time after time, He spoke to them, the Pharisees, and the multitude, of humility as the only path to the glory of God. He not only lived before them as the Lamb of God in His divine humility, He also more than once revealed to them the inmost secret of His life that I am among you as he that serves (Luke 22:27). He washed their feet, and told them they were to follow His example. Yet this was all of little use. At the Holy Supper, there was still the conflict as to who should be greatest. Clearly, they had often tried to learn His lessons, and firmly resolved not to grieve Him, but all in vain. No outward instruction, not even of Christ Himself; no argument, however convincing; no sense of the beauty of humility, however deep; no personal resolve or effort, however sincere and earnest, can cast out the devil of pride. When Satan casts out Satan, it is only to enter again, stronger yet more deeply hidden. None of these external efforts produces humility. It is only produced when the new nature in its divine humility takes the place of the old, to become our very nature.

Third, it is only by the indwelling of Christ in His divine humility that we become truly humble. We received our pride from Adam. We must receive our humility from another also. Pride is ours, and rules in us with terrible power, because it is our self, our very nature. Humility must be ours in the same way. It must be our very nature. As natural and easy as it has been to be proud, it must be the same – it will be – to be humble. The promise is: But where [even in the heart] sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Romans 5:20). All of Christ's teaching of His disciples, and all their futile efforts, were the necessary preparation for His entering into them in divine power, to give and be in them what He taught them to desire. In His death, He destroyed the power of the Devil, He put away sin, and He effected an everlasting redemption. In His resurrection, He received from the Father an entirely new life, the life of man in the power of God. This new life was communicated to men, allowing them to receive it and be renewed by filling their lives with His divine power. In His ascension, He received the Spirit of the Father. Through the Spirit He was able to do what He could not do while He was in bodily form: make Himself one with those He loved, actually live their life for them, so that they could live before the Father in a humility like His. It was He who lived and breathed in them, and on Pentecost He came and took possession. The work of preparation and conviction, the awakening of desire and hope, which His teaching had effected, was perfected by the mighty change that Pentecost brought about. The lives and letters of James, Peter, and John bear witness that everything was changed, and that the spirit of the meek-and-suffering Jesus had possession of them.

How should we respond to these things? Among my readers, I am sure there is more than one level of spiritual maturity. There may be some who have never thought specifically of the matter, and cannot quickly realize its immense importance as a life question for the church and its every member. There are others who have felt conviction for their shortcomings and put forth very diligent efforts, only to fail and be discouraged. Others may be able to give joyful testimony of spiritual blessing and power, and yet there has never been the needed conviction of what those around them still see as lacking. Still others may be able to witness that the Lord has given them deliverance and victory when it comes to humility, yet He taught them how much they still need and may expect out of the fullness of Jesus. To whichever group we belong, I urge the recognition of the pressing need there is to seek an even deeper conviction of the unique place that humility holds in the religion of Christ, and the utter impossibility of the church or the believer being what Christ would have them be, as long as His humility is not recognized as His chief importance, His first command, and our richest blessing. Let us consider how great an advantage the disciples had while this grace was still so terribly lacking in their lives, and let us pray to God that other gifts may not satisfy us to the point that we never grasp the fact that the absence of humility is the secret cause of why the power of God cannot do its mighty work. It is only when we, like the Son, truly know and show that we can do nothing of ourselves, that God will do all.

It is when the truth of an indwelling Christ takes the place it claims through the changed lives of believers, that the church will put on her beautiful garments, and humility will be seen in her teachers and members as the beauty of holiness.

VI

Humility in Daily Life

He that does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (1 John 4:20)

What a sobering thought, that our love for God is measured by our everyday interaction with men and the love it displays. Our love for God will be found to be an illusion, except where it is proven by the test of daily life with our fellow man. It is the same with our humility. It is easy to think we humble ourselves before God, but humility towards men will be the only sufficient proof that our humility before God is real. It will be the only proof that humility has taken up its residence in us, and become our very nature, the only proof that we, like Christ, have made ourselves of no reputation. When lowliness of heart has become not a posture we assume for a time, when we think of Him or pray to Him, but the very spirit of our life, then it will become obvious in all our behavior towards our brethren. This lesson is one of critical importance. The only humility that is really ours is not the humility we try to show before God in prayer, but that which we carry with us and actively live in our ordinary conduct. The insignificant matters of daily life are the important tests of eternity because they prove what Spirit truly dwells within us. It is in our most unguarded moments that we really show and see what we are. To know the humble man, to know how the humble man behaves, you must follow him in the common course of daily life.

Isn't this what Jesus taught? It was when the disciples disputed who should be greatest; when He saw how the Pharisees loved the chief place at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues; when He gave them the example of washing their feet, that He taught His lessons of humility. Humility before God is nothing unless it is proven through humility before men.

It is the same way in the teaching of Paul. To the Romans, he writes, with honour preferring one another (Romans 12:10); Be unanimous among yourselves, not high minded, but accommodating the humble . Do not be wise in your own opinion (Romans 12:16). To the Corinthians, Charity suffers long and is benign; charity envies not; charity does nothing without due reason, is not puffed up, is not injurious, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). There is no love without humility as its root. To the Galatians, Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another (Galatians 5:26). To the Ephesians, immediately after the three wonderful chapters on the heavenly life, he says, I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation with which ye are called, with all humility and meekness, with tolerance, forbearing one another in love, being diligent to guard the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3). To the Philippians, Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in humility let each esteem others better than themselves, with each one not looking to their own things, but also to the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a

slave, made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:3-8). And to the Colossians, Clothed, therefore, (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) with bowels of mercies, with kindness, with humility, with meekness, with tolerance, forbearing one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a quarrel against another: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye (Colossians 3:12-13). It is in our relationship to one another, in our treatment of one another, that the true lowliness of mind and the heart of humility will be seen. Our humility before God only has value inasmuch as it prepares us to reveal the humility of Jesus to our fellow man. Let us study humility in daily life in the light of these words.

The humble man seeks at all times to act according to the rule: with honour preferring one another; by charity serve one another; esteem[ing] others better than themselves; submitting yourselves one to another. The question is often asked, How we can count others better than ourselves, when we see that they are far below us in wisdom, holiness, natural gifts, or grace received? The question itself proves at once how little we understand what real lowliness of mind is. True humility comes when, in the light of God, we have seen ourselves to be nothing and have consented to part with and cast away self, to let God be all. The soul that has done this, and can say, I have lost myself in finding Him, no longer compares itself with others. It has given up forever every thought of self in God's presence. It interacts with its fellow man as one who is nothing, and seeks nothing for itself. This soul is a servant of God, and for His sake a servant of all. A faithful servant may be wiser than the master, and still retain the true spirit and attitude of the servant. The humble man looks at even the feeblest and most unworthy child of God, and honors him and prefers him in honor as the son of a King. The spirit of Him who washed the disciples' feet makes it a joy to us to be the least, to be servants one of another.

The humble man feels no jealousy or envy. He can praise God when others are favored and rewarded before him. He can bear to hear others praised and himself forgotten, because in God's presence he has learned to say with Paul, "I am nothing." He has received the spirit of Jesus, who didn't please Himself and didn't seek His own honor as the spirit of His life.

When the humble man is tempted to become impatient or offended, to have hard thoughts or use sharp words, because of the failings and sins of fellow Christians, he carries the Scripture in his heart, and shows it in his life, forbearing one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a quarrel against another: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye (Colossians 3:13). He has learned that by putting on the Lord Jesus, he has put on the heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and long-suffering. Jesus has taken the place of self, and it is not an impossibility to forgive as Jesus forgave. His humility does not exist only in thoughts or words, but in a heart of humility. This heart is encompassed by compassion and kindness, meekness and long-suffering, the sweet and lowly gentleness recognized as the mark of the Lamb of God.

In striving after the higher experiences of the Christian life, the believer is often in danger of aiming at and rejoicing in what one might call the more human, manly virtues, such as boldness, joy, contempt of the world, zeal, and self-sacrifice; even the old stoics taught and practiced these. While the deeper and gentler, more heavenly attributes, those which Jesus first taught in His time on earth, those which are more distinctly connected with His cross and death of self, poverty of spirit, meekness, humility, and lowliness, are scarcely thought of or valued. For this reason, let us put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and long-suffering. Let us prove our Christlikeness, not only in our zeal for saving the lost, but also openly in all our interactions with the brethren, by being tolerant and forgiving one another, even as the Lord forgave us.

Fellow Christians, let us diligently study the Bible portrait of the humble man. Let us ask other believers and ask the world, whether they recognize in us the likeness to the original. Let us be content with nothing less than taking each of these texts as the promise of what God will

work in us. These promises are the revelation in words of what the spirit of Jesus will create and cause to grow within us. Let each failure and shortcoming simply urge us to turn humbly and meekly to the meek and lowly Lamb of God. We have the assurance that where He is enthroned in the heart, His humility and gentleness will be one of the streams of living water that flow from within us. [1]

[1] "I knew Jesus, and He was very precious to my soul, but I found something in me that would not keep sweet and patient and kind. I did what I could to keep it down, but it was there. I besought Jesus to do something for me, and when I gave Him my will, He came to my heart, and took out all that would not be sweet, all that would not be kind, all that would not be patient, and then He shut the door."—George Foxe

Once again, I repeat what I have said before. I feel deeply that we have a very poor understanding of what the church suffers because of the lack of divine humility, the nothingness that makes room for God to prove His power. It was not long ago that a Christian missionary friend expressed his deep sorrow that in some cases the spirit of love and tolerance was sadly lacking. The men and women in Europe, of whom he was referring, could each choose their own circle of friends, but when faced with others of incompatible minds, they found it hard to endure, love, and keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Those who should have been fellow helpers of each other's joy became a hindrance and a weariness. All this happened for one reason: the lack of humility which counts itself nothing, which rejoices in becoming and being counted the least, and which only seeks, like Jesus, to be the servant, helper, and comforter of others, even the lowest and most unworthy.

From where does it come, that men who have joyfully given up themselves for Christ, find it so hard to give up themselves for their brethren? Isn't the blame with the church? It has barely taught that the humility of Christ is the first of the virtues, the best of all the attributes and powers of the Spirit. It has not proven by its behavior that a Christlike humility is what it, like Christ, places and preaches first, as what is needed and possible. Let us not be discouraged. Let the discovery of the lack of this quality stir us to a greater expectation from God. Let us look at every person who annoys or agitates us, as God's means of grace, God's instrument for our purification, for the working out of the humility Jesus our Life breathes within us. And let us have such faith in the completeness of God, and the nothingness of self, that as nothing in our own eyes, we may, in God's power, only seek to serve one another in love.

VII

Humility and Holiness

Who say, Stand by thyself, do not come near to me; for I am holier than thou (Isaiah 65:5).

We speak of the Holiness Movement in our times, and praise God for it. We hear a great deal about seekers after holiness and professors of holiness, holiness teaching, and holiness meetings. The blessed truths of holiness in Christ and holiness by faith are being emphasized as never before. The great test of whether the holiness we profess to seek or attain is truth and life, will be whether it produces increasing humility. In the creature, humility is the one thing necessary to allow God's holiness to dwell in him and shine through him. In Jesus, the Holy One of God who makes us holy, divine humility was the secret of His life, death, and exaltation. The one foolproof test of our holiness will be the humility we demonstrate before God and men. Humility is the bloom and beauty of holiness.

The distinguishing feature of counterfeit holiness is its lack of humility. Every seeker of holiness needs to be on his guard, so he doesn't allow pride to creep in against his knowledge, and so that what began in the Spirit attempts to be perfected in the flesh. Two men went up into the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other a publican. There was no place or position as sacred as the temple. The fact that the Pharisee can enter there shows that pride can lift its head in the very temple of God and make His worship the scene of its self-exaltation. Since Christ exposed his pride, the Pharisee has put on the nature of the publican. Now the confessor of deep sinfulness and the professor of the highest holiness must be on the watch. When we desire most to have our heart become the temple of God, we will find two men coming up to pray. The publican will find that his danger is not from the Pharisee beside him, who despises him, but from the Pharisee within him who praises and honors himself. In God's temple, when we think we are in the holiest of all, in the presence of His holiness, let us beware of pride. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them (Job 1:6).

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are: extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican (Luke 18:11). It might be the very thanksgiving we offer to God, the very confession that God has done it all, that causes complacency. Yes, even when in the temple, when the words of repentance and trust in God's mercy are heard, the Pharisee may praise God with his mouth and inwardly be congratulating himself. Pride can disguise itself in the appearance of praise or repentance. Even though the words, I am not as other men, are rejected and condemned, their essence is often found in our feelings and words towards our fellow worshippers and fellow man. Would you know if this is really true? Just listen to the way churches and Christians often speak of one another. How little of the meekness and gentleness of Jesus is seen. It is barely remembered that deep humility must be the theme of what the servants of Jesus say about themselves or each other. There are

not many churches, conventions, committees, or even foreign missions that are not affected by the influence of pride. Leaders in these ventures exhibit touchiness and impatience when defending themselves. They use sharp judgement, unkind words, and do not consider others as better than themselves. Their holiness contains little of the meekness of Christ. [1] In their spiritual history, men may have had times of great humbling and brokenness. This is a completely different thing than being clothed with humility, from having a humble spirit. It is different from having that lowliness of mind where a man considers himself the servant of others, and in doing this, displays the very mind of Christ.

[1] "Me is a most exacting personage, requiring the best seats and the highest places for itself, and feeling grievously wounded if its claim are not recognized and its rights considered. Most of the quarrels among Christian workers arise from the clamourings of this gigantic Me. … How few of us understand the true glory of taking our seats in the lowest rooms!"—Hannah Whitall Smith, Every-day Religion .

Stand by thyself, do not come near to me; for I am holier than thou (Isaiah 65:5). What a poor copy of holiness! Jesus the Holy One is the humble One. For this reason, the holiest will forever be the humblest. There is none holy but God. We can only have as much holiness as we have of God. Only what we have of God will determine our real humility. Humility is, simply stated, the disappearance of self in the vision and understanding that God is all. The holiest will be the humblest. Unfortunately, even though the shamefully boasting Jew of Isaiah's day is often not found, even our worldly manners have taught us not to speak in this way, and the spirit of the boasting Jew is still often seen in the treatment of fellow saints or the children of the world. How often the attitude in which opinions are given, work is undertaken, and faults are exposed, are made to appear to be like the publican but the voice is that of the Pharisee. God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are (Luke 18:11). Is it even possible to find this type of humility, that men would still consider themselves less than the least of all saints (Ephesians 3:8), the servants of all? It is. Charity suffers long and is benign; charity envies not; charity does nothing without due reason, is not puffed up, is not injurious, seeks not her own (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). Where the spirit of love is embraced in the heart, where the divine nature comes to full maturity, where Christ the meek and lowly Lamb of God is truly formed within, there is given the power of a perfect love that forgets itself and finds its reward in blessing others. The one who loves, bears with them and honors them, however feeble may they be. Where this love enters, there God enters. Where God has entered in His power, and reveals Himself as All, there the creature becomes nothing. Where the creature becomes nothing before God, it cannot be anything but humble towards the fellow creature. The presence of God is no longer a thing that changes with circumstances, but the shelter where the soul lives forever. The creature's nothingness before God becomes the holy place where all its words and actions come from.

May God teach us that our thoughts, words, and feelings concerning our fellow man are His test of our humility towards Him. Our humility before Him is the only power that enables us to always be humble with our fellow man. Our humility must be the life of Christ, the Lamb of God, within us.

Let all teachers of holiness and all seekers after holiness take warning. There is no pride as dangerous, because it is so subtle and sneaky, as the pride of holiness. It is not that a man ever says, or even thinks, Stand by thyself, do not come near to me; for I am holier than thou (Isaiah 65:5). No, the mere thought would be treated with disgust. But unconsciously, there grows a hidden habit of the soul, it feels satisfied in its accomplishments, and it can't help but compare itself to the position of others. It can be recognized simply in the absence of that deep selflessness which can only be the evidence of the soul that has seen the glory of God. It reveals itself, not only in words or thoughts, but also in a tone, a way of speaking of others. Those who have the gift of spiritual discernment can't help but recognize the power of self. Even

the world with its watchful eyes notices it, and points to it as proof that the profession of a heavenly life does not necessarily bear any heavenly fruit. Brothers and sisters, let us beware! Unless we make, in the pursuit of holiness, the increase of humility the focus of our study, we may find that we have been delighting in beautiful thoughts and feelings, and the motions of sanctification, while the only evidence of the presence of God – the disappearance of self – remains seriously lacking. Come, let us run to Jesus and hide ourselves in Him until we embrace and receive His humility. This alone is our holiness.

VIII

Humility and Sin

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first (1 Timothy 1:15).

Humility is often identified with repentance and remorse. As a consequence, there appears to be no way of nurturing humility except by keeping the soul focused on its sin. We have learned that humility is something else and something more. We saw in the teaching of our Lord Jesus and in the Epistles how often humility is taught without any reference to sin. In the whole relationship of the creature to the Creator, in the life of Jesus as He lived it and communicated it to us, humility is the very essence of holiness, the fullness that is in Christ. It is the displacement of self by the enthronement of God. Where God is all, self is nothing.

Man's sin and God's grace bring a whole new layer and dimension to the topic of humility. We only have to look at a man like the apostle Paul to see how, through his life as a holy man, the total awareness of having been a sinner remains at the forefront of his mind. We all know the passages where he refers to his life as a persecutor and blasphemer. For I am the least of the apostles, for I am not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the congregation of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace towards me was not in vain, for I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me (1 Corinthians 15:9-10). Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of the Christ (Ephesians 3:8). [I was] before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious, but I was received unto mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first (1 Timothy 1:13, 15). God's grace had saved him. God remembered his sins no more forever, but he could never forget how terribly he had sinned. The more he rejoiced in God's salvation and his experience of God's grace filled him with joy unspeakable, the more he was aware that he was a saved sinner. Salvation had no meaning or sweetness except when it was looked at through the lens of being a sinner. This made it precious and real to him. Never, for a moment, could he forget that it was a sinner God had taken up in His arms and crowned with His love.

The texts we have just quoted are often looked at as Paul's confession of daily sinning. They only have to be read carefully in their context to see that this is not the case. This recognition of sinfulness functioning in humility causes the ransomed to bow before the throne, as those who have been washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb. They can never be anything but ransomed sinners, but the understanding of grace allows them to see their sin, and salvation from it, as a demonstration of God's love. The humility that accompanies his admission as a sinner takes on a new meaning when he learns how it enhances him as a creature. Humility produces adoration and praise in the context of God's wondrous redeeming love.

The true importance of what these words of the apostle Paul teach us comes through strongly when we notice the remarkable fact that, through his whole Christian life, we never find

from his pen anything like confession of sin. Nowhere is there any mention of shortcoming or defect, or any suggestion to his readers that he failed in his duty or sinned against the law of perfect love. On the contrary, there are several passages where he defends himself in language that means nothing if it were not for the faultless life he lived. Ye are witnesses, and God also, of how holy and just and irreprehensible our behaviour was among you that believe (1 Thessalonians 2:10). For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with carnal wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world and more abundantly towards you (2 Corinthians 1:12). This is not an ideal or an aspiration; it is a statement of what his actual life had been. However we account for this absence of any confession of sin, everyone will admit that it points to a life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. Such a life is seldom experienced or expected these days.

The point I wish to emphasize is that our only place of joy and our constant position before God must be to confess that we are sinners saved by grace. Daily sinning is not where the secret of deeper humility will be found, but in our constant position of abundant grace.

With Paul's deep remembrance of having sinned so terribly in the past, before grace met him, and the awareness of being kept from present sinning, he always remembered the dark, hidden power of sin only kept out by the presence and power of the indwelling Christ. And I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing; for I have the desire, but I am not able to perform that which is good (Romans 7:18). This describes the flesh as it remains until the end. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, Jesus, has made me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2). The glorious deliverance is neither the destruction nor the sanctification of the flesh, but a continuous victory given by the Spirit as He puts to death the deeds of the body. As health expels disease, light swallows up darkness, and life conquers death, the indwelling of Christ through the Spirit is the health, light, and life of the soul. With this, the conviction of helplessness and danger continuously transform faith, in the temporary action of the Holy Spirit, creating a sense of dependence in the one who is disciplined by it. In this way, faith, joy, and humility work together in the grace of God.

The three passages quoted above all show that it was the wonderful grace given to Paul, of which he felt the need every moment, that humbled him so deeply. The grace of God was with him, and enabled him to labor more abundantly than all the rest. This grace allowed him to preach to the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ. It was this grace which kept his consciousness aware of having once sinned, and being bound to sin, so intensely alive. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Romans 5:20). This reveals how the very essence of grace is to deal with and take away sin. It will always be that the more generous the experience of grace, the more intense the awareness of being a sinner. It is not sin, but God's grace that shows a man and reminds him of what a sinner he was and keeps him truly humble. It is not sin but grace that will make me know myself as a sinner, and make the sinner's place of deepest humility the place I never leave.

I fear that there are many who desire to humble themselves, and have to confess with sorrow that a humble spirit with its accompaniments of kindness, compassion, submission, and perseverance is still as out of reach as ever. Being occupied with self, even to the point of hating yourself, can never free us from self. It is only by the revelation of God, not by the law condemning sin but by His grace delivering from it, that will make us humble. The law may break the heart with fear, but it is only by grace that sweet humility becomes a joy to the soul and its second nature. It was as God revealed Himself in holiness, as He drew near to make Himself known in His grace, that Abraham, Jacob, Job, and Isaiah bowed so low. It is the soul where God the Creator becomes the all of the creature in its nothingness. God the Redeemer, in His grace, becomes the all of the sinner in his sinfulness. It is in this place where the soul of the creature will find itself so filled with His presence that there will be no place for self. The

promise will be fulfilled: The haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day (Isaiah 2:17).

It is the sinner dwelling in the full light of God's holy, redeeming love, in the experience of the full indwelling of divine love, which comes through Christ and the Holy Spirit, who can be humble. Not to be occupied with your sin, but to be occupied with God, brings deliverance from self.

IX

Humility and Faith

> How can ye believe, who take glory one from another, and seek not the glory that comes only from God? (John 5:44) .

In a sermon I heard recently, the speaker said that the blessings of the higher Christian life were often like the objects displayed in a shop window: one could see them clearly and yet could not reach them. If a man was told to stretch out his hand and take an item, he would recognize the thick pane of plate glass separating him from them. In a similar way, Christians may see clearly the promises of perfect peace and rest, overflowing love and joy, and abiding fellowship and fruitfulness, and yet feel there is something between, hindering the true possession. And what might that be? Nothing but pride. The promises made to us through faith are so free and sure that it can only be something that hinders faith, which hinders the blessing from being ours. In our text, Jesus reveals to us that it is indeed pride that makes faith impossible. How can ye believe, who take glory one from another? In their very nature, pride and faith are incompatible. We will learn that faith and humility are at root one, and we can never have more true faith than we have true humility. It is possible to have strong intellectual conviction and assurance of the truth while pride is kept in the heart, but it makes living faith, which has power with God, an impossibility.

We only need to pause for a moment to discover what faith is. It is the confession of nothingness and helplessness, the surrender and the waiting to let God work! Isn't it the most humbling thing there can be, the acceptance of our place as dependents who can claim, receive, or accomplish nothing apart from grace? Humility is simply the habit which prepares the soul for living on trust. Every breath of pride, in self-seeking, self-will, self-confidence, or self-exaltation, is just the strengthening of that self which cannot enter the kingdom. It cannot possess the things of the kingdom, because it refuses to allow God to be the All in All.

Faith is the sensory organ used to understand and take hold of the heavenly world and its blessings. Faith seeks the glory that comes from God, that only comes where God is all. As long as we take glory from one another, or seek, love, and jealously guard the glory of this life and the honor and reputation that comes from men, we do not seek and cannot receive the glory that comes from God. Pride renders faith impossible. Salvation comes through a cross and a crucified Christ. Salvation is the fellowship with the crucified Christ in the meaning of His cross. Salvation is partnership with, delight in, and participation in the humility of Jesus. Is it difficult to believe that our faith is so feeble when pride still reigns so much? We have barely learned to long or pray for humility as the most needed and beautiful part of salvation.

Humility and faith are more closely tied together in Scripture than many realize. This concept is visible in the life of Christ. There are two specific cases where He spoke of great faith. Jesus marveled at the faith of the centurion, saying, Verily I say unto you that not even in Israel have I found such faith (Matthew 8:10). Jesus' reaction was in response to the centurion saying, Lord, I

am not worthy that thou should come under my roof (Matthew 8:8). Again, He recognized the mother's great faith when she accepted the name of a dog, and said, Yes, Lord, yet the little dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table (Matthew 15:27). It is humility that brings a soul to be nothing before God and removes every hindrance to faith. Humility makes the soul desire to please Him by trusting in Him fully.

Friend, don't we have here the cause of failure in the pursuit of holiness? Isn't it this, even though we didn't know it, that made our sanctification and faith so superficial and short-lived? We had no idea to what extent pride and self were still secretly working within us, and how only God, by His entering in and His mighty power, could cast them out. We didn't understand how nothing but the new and divine nature, completely taking the place of the old self, could make us really humble. We didn't know that absolute humility must be the origin of every prayer and every approach to God as well as of every dealing with man. We might as well attempt to see without eyes or live without breath if we think we can believe, draw near to God, or dwell in His love, without an all-encompassing humility and lowliness of heart.

Friend, haven't we made a mistake taking so much trouble to believe, while at the same time the old self, in its pride, attempted to possess God's blessing and riches? No wonder we could not believe. Let us change our course. Let us seek first of all to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. He will exalt us. The cross, the death, and the grave, into which Jesus humbled Himself, were His path to the glory of God. And they are our path. Let our one desire and our fervent prayer be, to be humbled with Him and like Him. Let us accept gladly whatever can humble us before God or men. This alone is the path to the glory of God.

You might feel inclined to ask a question. I have spoken of some who have experienced blessing, or are the means of bringing blessing to others, and yet are lacking in humility. You might ask if these prove that they have true, even strong, faith, though they show very clearly that they still seek the honor that comes from men. There is more than one answer to this question. The primary answer is that they have a measure of faith, in proportion to the gifts they have been given and the blessing they bring to others. However, even in their blessing, the work of their faith is hindered through the lack of humility. The blessing is often superficial or temporary, just because they are not the nothing that opens the way for God to be all. A deeper humility would without doubt bring the deeper and fuller blessing of the Holy Spirit, not only working in them as a Spirit of power, but also dwelling in them in the fullness of His grace and especially that of humility. This life of power, holiness, and steadfastness is all too seldom seen.

How can ye believe, who take glory one from another? Friend, the only thing that can cure you of the desire for man's praise or the hurt feelings and anger which come when it is not given, is by only seeking the glory that comes from God. Let the glory of the all-glorious God be everything to you. You will be freed from the glory of men and of self, and be content and glad to be nothing. Out of this nothingness, you will grow strong in faith, giving glory to God. You will find that the deeper you sink in humility before Him, the nearer He is to fulfill every desire of your faith.

X

Humility and Death to Self

> He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8).

Humility is the path to death, because in death it gives the most evident proof of its perfection. Humility is the blossom of which death to self is the perfect fruit. Jesus humbled Himself to the point of death, and revealed the path we too must walk. As there was no way for Him to prove the completeness of His surrender to God, or leave His human nature behind but through death, so it is with us too. Humility must lead us to die to self. In this way, we prove how completely we have given ourselves up to it and to God. We are freed from the fallen nature, and find the path that leads to life in God. Humility is the breath and joy of that new nature.

We spoke of what Jesus did for His disciples when He communicated His resurrection life to them. How through sending the Holy Spirit, He, the glorified and enthroned Meekness, actually came from heaven Himself to dwell in them. He won the power to do this through His death. In its inmost nature, the life He offered was a life out of death, a life that had been surrendered to death, and had been won through death. He who came to dwell in them was Himself One who had been dead and now lives forevermore. His life, His person, His presence, bears the evidence of death, of being a life born out of death. That life in His disciples bears the evidence of death too. It is only as the spirit of the death, of the dying One, dwells and works in the soul, that the power of His life can be known. The first and most prominent of the marks of the dying of the Lord Jesus, of the evidence that shows the true follower of Jesus, is humility, for these two reasons: Only humility leads to perfect death, and only death perfects humility. Humility and death are in their very nature, one. Humility is the bud, and in death, the fruit is ripened to perfection.

Humility leads to perfect death. Humility means the giving up of self, and taking the place of perfect nothingness before God.

Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient unto death. In death, He gave the highest, the perfect proof of having given up His will to the will of God. In death, He gave up His self, with its natural reluctance to drink the cup. He gave up the life He had in common with our human nature. He died to self and the sin that tempted Him. So, as man, He entered into the perfect life of God. If it had not been for His endless humility, counting Himself as nothing except as a servant to do and suffer the will of God, He never would have died.

This gives us the answer to the question that is so often asked, but which is so seldom understood: How can I die to self? The death to self is not your work, it is God's work. In Christ, you are dead to sin. The life in you has gone through the process of death and resurrection. You can be sure you are dead to sin. The full manifestation of the power of this death in your character and conduct depends on how fully the Holy Spirit gives the power of the death of

Christ. Here is where teaching is needed. If you desire to enter into full fellowship with Christ in His death and know the full deliverance from self, humble yourself. This is your one duty. Place yourself before God in your utter helplessness. Agree with the fact that you are helpless to slay or make yourself alive. Sink down into your own nothingness, in the spirit of meek, patient, and trustful surrender to God. Accept every humiliation; look at every fellow man who annoys or offends you, as a way for grace to humble you. Use every opportunity of humbling yourself before your fellow man as a steppingstone to live a humble life before God. God will accept the humbling of yourself as proof that your whole heart desires it. Humbling yourself is your preparation for His mighty work of grace as He reveals Christ fully in you. It is the path of humility that leads to perfect death, the full and perfect understanding that we are dead in Christ.

Only this death leads to perfect humility. Oh, beware of the mistake so many make, who are eager to be humble, but are afraid to be too humble. They have so many qualifications and limitations, so many reasons and questions, as to what true humility is to be and to do, that they never unreservedly yield themselves to it. Beware of this. Humble yourself unto death. It is in death to self that humility is perfected. You can be confident that at the core of all real experience of increasing grace, of all true growth in sanctification, of all increasing conformity to the likeness of Jesus, there must be a deadness to self that proves itself to God and men in our character and actions. Sadly, it is possible to speak of the death-life and the Spirit-walk, while being unable to see how much there is of self. Death to self has no surer death-mark than a humility which makes itself of no reputation, which empties out itself, and takes the form of a servant. It is possible to speak often and honestly of fellowship with a despised and rejected Jesus, and of bearing His cross, while the humility of the Lamb of God is not seen and is barely thought of. The Lamb of God means two things: meekness and death. Let us seek to receive Him in both forms. In Him, they are inseparable. They must be in us too.

What a hopeless task if we had to do the work! Nature can never overcome nature, not even with the help of grace. Self can never cast out self, even in the new man. Praise God, the work has been done, finished, and perfected forever! The death of Jesus, once and forever, is our death to self. The ascension of Jesus, His entering once and forever into the holiest place, has given us the Holy Spirit to communicate to us in power, and make the power of the death-life ours. As the soul, in the pursuit and practice of humility, follows in the steps of Jesus, its awareness of the need of something more is awakened. Its desire and hope is invigorated. Its faith is strengthened, and it learns to look up, claim, and receive the fullness of the spirit of Jesus. This faith can daily maintain His death to self and sin in its full power, and make humility the penetrating spirit of our life. (See Note C.)

Know ye not that all of us that are baptized into Jesus the Christ are baptized into his death? (Romans 6:3). Likewise also reckon yourselves to be truly dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ, Jesus, our Lord (Romans 6:11). Present yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead (Romans 6:13). The whole self-consciousness of the Christian is to be saturated and characterized by the spirit that brought about the death of Christ. His entire existence is to present himself to God as one who has died in Christ, and in Christ is alive from the dead, exhibiting in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. His life ever bears witness to the death to sin and death, and new life resurrected in power where Jesus dwells.

Believer, claim in faith the death and the life of Jesus as your own. Enter His grave, into the rest from self and its work, the rest of God. With Christ, who committed His spirit into the Father's hands, humble yourself and descend each day into that perfect, helpless dependence on God. God will raise you up and exalt you. Sink every morning in deep, deep nothingness into the grave of Jesus; every day the life of Jesus will be manifest in thee. Let a willing, loving, restful, happy humility be the evidence that you have claimed your birthright: the baptism into

the death of Christ. For by one offering he has perfected for ever those that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:14). The souls that enter into His humiliation will find in Him the power to see and count self as dead. As those who have learned and received of Him, they will walk with all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love. The death-life is seen in meekness and lowliness like that of Christ.

XI

Humility and Happiness

> Most gladly, therefore, I will rather glory in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am content in weaknesses, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

So that Paul would not glorify himself, which would be easy to do due to his revelation in the Spirit, he was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. Paul's first desire was to have it removed, and he pleaded with the Lord three times that it would be removed. The answer came that the trial was a blessing. Through the weakness and humiliation it brought, the grace and strength of the Lord could be better manifested. Paul instantly entered a new stage in his relationship to the trial. Instead of simply enduring it, he most gladly gloried in it. Instead of asking for deliverance, he took pleasure in it. He had learned that the place of humiliation is the place of blessing, power, and joy.

Every Christian passes through these two stages in his pursuit of humility. In the first stage, he fears, flees, and seeks deliverance from all that can humble him. He has not yet learned to seek humility at any cost. He has accepted the command to be humble, and seeks to obey it, only to find how completely he fails. He prays for humility, at times very sincerely; but in his secret heart, he prays more, if not in word, then in wish, to be kept from the very things that will make him humble. He is not yet so in love with humility, as the beauty of the Lamb of God and the joy of heaven, that he would sell everything to obtain it. In his pursuit of it, and his prayer for it, there is still a sense of burden and bondage. To humble himself has not yet become the spontaneous expression of a life and nature that is genuinely humble. It has not yet become his joy and only pleasure. He cannot yet say, "I glory in weakness with joy and take pleasure in whatever humbles me."

Can we hope to reach the stage in which this will be the case? Undoubtedly. What will it be that brings us there? That which brought Paul there: a new revelation of the Lord Jesus. Nothing but the presence of God can reveal and drive out self. A clearer insight was given to Paul into the deep truth that the presence of Jesus will banish every desire to seek anything in ourselves, and will make us delight in every humiliation that prepares us for His fuller manifestation. Our humiliations lead us, in the experience of the presence and power of Jesus, to choose humility as our highest blessing. Let us try and learn the lessons Paul teaches.

We may have advanced believers, famous teachers, and men of heavenly experiences who have not yet fully learned the lesson of perfect humility, gladly glorying in weakness. We see this in Paul. The danger of praising himself was coming very near. He didn't know yet what it meant to be nothing, to die so that Christ alone might live in him, to take pleasure in all that brought him low. It appears that this was the highest lesson he had to learn, full conformity to his Lord in weakness, that God might be all.

The topmost lesson a believer has to learn is humility. Oh, that every Christian who seeks to advance in holiness may remember this well! There may be intense sanctification, heartfelt enthusiasm, and heavenly experience, and yet if it is not prevented by very special dealings of the Lord, there may be an unconscious self-exaltation with it all. Let us learn the lesson: the highest holiness is the deepest humility. Let us remember that it comes not of itself, but only as it is made a matter of special dealing on the part of our faithful Lord to those who faithfully serve Him.

Let us look at our lives in the light of this experience, and see if we gladly glory in weakness, and take pleasure in injury, need, and distress. Yes, let us ask if we have learned to consider a reprimand, just or unjust, a criticism from friend or enemy, an injury, trouble, or difficulty into which others bring us, as above all an opportunity to prove how Jesus is all to us. Have we learned that our own pleasure or honor is nothing, and humiliation is in very truth what we take pleasure in? It is the deep happiness of heaven to be so free from self that whatever is said of us or done to us is lost and swallowed up in the thought that Jesus is all.

Let us trust Him who took charge of Paul to take charge of us too. Paul needed special discipline and, with it, special instruction to learn what was more precious than even the unspeakable things he heard in heaven. He needed to learn what it is to glory in weakness and lowliness. We need it too, oh so much. He who cared for him will care for us too. The school in which Jesus taught Paul is our school too. He watches over us with a jealous, loving care, lest we exalt ourselves . When we are doing so, He seeks to reveal the evil to us, and deliver us from it. In trial, weakness, and trouble, He seeks to bring us low until we learn that His grace is all, and to take pleasure in the very thing that humbles us. His strength is made perfect in our weakness. His presence filling and satisfying our emptiness becomes the secret of a humility that will never fail. It can work in us and through us as it did in Paul, and say, “I am like Paul, though I am nothing.” His humiliation led him to true humility, with its wonderful gladness, glory, and pleasure, in all that humbles.

Most gladly, therefore, I will rather glory in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me (2 Corinthians 12:9). The humble man has learned the secret of lasting gladness. The weaker he feels, the lower he sinks, and the greater his humiliations appear, the more the power and the presence of Christ are his portion. When he acknowledges that he is nothing, the Word of his Lord brings ever-deeper joy, and he understands the words: My grace is sufficient for thee.

I feel as if I must sum up the two lessons: The danger of pride is greater and nearer than we think, and the grace for humility too.

The danger of pride is greater and nearer than we think, and especially at the time of our highest spiritual experiences. The preacher of spiritual truth with an admiring congregation, the gifted speaker on a Holiness platform, the Christian giving testimony of a blessed experience, and the evangelist moving on in victory – no man knows the hidden danger to which these are exposed. Paul was in danger without knowing it. What Jesus did for him is written for our caution, that we may know our danger and know our only safety. If ever it has been said of a teacher or professor of holiness that he is so full of self, or he does not practice what he preaches, let it be said no more. Jesus, in whom we trust, can make us humble.

Yes, the grace for humility is greater and nearer than we think. The humility of Jesus is our salvation. Jesus Himself is our humility. Our humility is His care and His work. His grace is sufficient for us to meet the temptation of pride too. His strength will be perfected in our weakness. Let us choose to be weak, to be low, to be nothing. Let humility be to us joy and gladness. Let us glory and take pleasure in weakness, in all that can humble us and keep us low. The power of Christ will rest on us. Christ humbled Himself, and as a result, God exalted Him. Christ will humble us and keep us humble. Let us heartily consent and, with trust and joy,

accept all that humbles, and as a result, the power of Christ will rest on us. We will find that the deepest humility is the secret of the truest happiness, and of a joy that nothing can destroy.

XII

Humility and Exaltation

He that humbles himself shall be exalted (Luke 14:11) .

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up (James 4:10) .

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time (1 Peter 5:6). Just yesterday, I was asked the question, "How can I conquer this pride?" The answer was simple. Two things are needed: Do what God says your work is, and humble yourself. Trust Him to do what He says His work is, and He will exalt you.

The command is clear: Humble yourself. That does not mean it is your work to conquer and cast out the pride of your nature, and form within yourself the lowliness of the holy Jesus. No, this is God's work; He is the one that lifts you up into the real likeness of the beloved Son.

What the command does mean is that you take every opportunity to humble yourself before God and man. Humble yourself in the faith of the grace that is already working in you, and in the assurance of more grace that is coming. Humble yourself in the light that awareness flashes on the pride of the heart and its workings. Even though there may be much failure and falling, stand firm under the unchanging command: Humble yourself. Accept with gratitude everything that God allows from within or without, from friend or enemy, in nature or in grace, to remind you of your need of humbling, and to help you to it. Consider humility to be the mother-virtue, your very first duty before God, the one constant safeguard of the soul, and set your heart on it as the source of all blessing. The promise is divine and sure. He that humbles himself will be exalted. Be sure you do the one thing God asks, and humble yourself. God will be faithful to do the one thing He promised. He will give more grace, and He will exalt you in due time.

All God's dealings with man are characterized by two stages. There is the time of preparation, when command and promise, mingled with the experience of effort, weakness, failure, and partial success, produce the expectance of something better. These prod, train, and discipline men for a higher stage. Then comes the time of fulfillment, when faith inherits the promise, and enjoys what it so often struggled for in vain. These stages hold true in every part of the Christian life, and in the pursuit of every separate virtue. It is grounded in the very nature of things. In all that concerns our redemption, God must take the initiative. When that has been done, man's turn comes. In the effort to pursue obedience and fulfillment, he must learn to know his weakness, in self-despair to die to himself. In this way, he is equipped voluntarily and intelligently to receive from God the completion of that which he accepted in the beginning in ignorance. So God, before man correctly knew Him or fully understood what His purpose was, is longed for and welcomed as the All in All.

It is the same in the pursuit of humility. To every Christian the command comes from the throne of God Himself to humble yourself. The enthusiastic attempt to listen and obey will be rewarded with the painful discovery of two things. The one, being the depth of pride that is unwilling to count oneself and be counted as nothing, and to submit absolutely to God. The

other, what absolute weakness there is in all our efforts, and all our prayers for God's help to destroy the hideous monster. Blessed is the man who learns to put his hope in God, and persevere in spite of all the power of pride within him, with acts of humiliation before God and men. We know the law of human nature: acts produce habits, habits breed temperament, temperament forms the will, and the rightly formed will is character. It is no different in the work of grace. Acts repeated create habits and temperament, and these strengthen the will. He who works both to will and to do comes with His mighty power and Spirit. Ultimately, the humbling of the proud heart is rewarded with more grace, in which the spirit of Jesus has conquered and brought the new nature to its maturity, where the meek and lowly One now dwells forever. (See Note D.)

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will exalt you. In what way does the exaltation exist? The highest glory of the creature is in being only a vessel, to receive and enjoy and show forth the glory of God. It can do this only as it is willing to be nothing in itself, that God may be all. Water always fills first the lowest places. The lower and the emptier a man lays himself before God, the speedier and the fuller will be the inflow of divine glory. The exaltation God promises is not – cannot be – any external thing apart from Himself. All that He has to give or can give is only more of Himself, to take more complete possession. The exaltation is not, like an earthly prize, something frivolous, in no connection with the conduct to be rewarded. No, but it is in its very nature the effect and result of the humbling of ourselves. It is nothing but the gift of such a divine indwelling humility, such a conformity to and possession of the humility of the Lamb of God, as allows us to receive fully the indwelling of God.

He that humbles himself will be exalted. Jesus Himself is the proof, verifying the truth of these words. The certainty of their fulfillment to us is made more sure in the fact that He is the pledge. Let us take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart. If we are willing to stoop to Him, as He has stooped to us, He will stoop to each one of us again, and we will not be unequally yoked with Him. As we enter deeper into the fellowship of His humiliation, and either humble ourselves or endure the humbling of men, we can count on the fact that the Spirit of God and of glory will rest upon us. The presence and the power of the glorified Christ will come to them that are of a humble spirit. When God can again have His rightful place in us, He will lift us up. Make His glory your consideration in humbling yourself. He will make your glory His thoughtfulness in perfecting your humility, and breathing into you, as your indwelling life, the very spirit of His Son. As the all-pervading life of God possesses you, there will be nothing so natural and sweet as to be nothing, without a thought or wish for self, because all is occupied with Him who supplies all. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather glory in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me (2 Corinthians 12:9). Friend, don't we have here the reason that our sanctification and our faith have produced so little in the pursuit of holiness? It was by self and its strength that the work was done under the name of faith. It was for self and its happiness that God was searched for. It was, unconsciously, but in self and its holiness that the soul rejoiced. We never knew that humility, absolute, abiding, Christlike humility and modesty, penetrating and marking our whole life with God and man, was the most essential element of the life of the holiness we searched for.

It is only in the possession of God that I lose myself. As it is in the height, width, and glory of the sunshine that the speck of dust playing in its beams is seen. Even so, humility is taking our place in God's presence to be nothing but a bit of dust dwelling in the sunlight of His love.

> How great is God! How small am I!
> Lost, swallowed up in Love's immensity!
> God only there, not I.

May God teach us to believe that to be humble, to be nothing in His presence, is the highest attainment, and the fullest blessing of the Christian life. I dwell in the high place and in holiness and with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit (Isaiah 57:15). Be this our portion!

> Oh, to be emptier, lowlier,
> Mean, unnoticed, and unknown,
> And to God a vessel holier,
> Filled with Christ, and Christ alone.

Notes

Note A

All this to make it known through the region of eternity that pride can degrade the highest angels into devils, and humility raise fallen flesh and blood to the thrones of angels. Thus, this is the great end of God raising a new creation out of a fallen kingdom of angels. For this end, it stands in its state of war between the fire and pride of fallen angels, and the humility of the Lamb of God. That the last trumpet may sound the great truth through the depths of eternity, that evil can have no beginning but from pride, and no end but from humility. The truth is this: Pride must die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you. Under the banner of the truth, give yourself up to the meek and humble spirit of the holy Jesus. Humility must sow the seed, or there can be no reaping in heaven. Don't look at pride only as an unbecoming temper, nor at humility only as a decent virtue. The one is death, and the other is life. One is all hell, and the other is all heaven. As much as you have pride within you, you have the fallen angel alive in you. As much as you have true humility, you have of the Lamb of God within you. If you could see what every stirring of pride does to your soul, you would beg of everything you touch to tear the viper from you, even if it required the loss of a hand, or an eye. If you could see what a sweet, divine, transforming power there is in humility, how it expels the poison of your nature, and makes room for the Spirit of God to live in you, you would rather wish to be the footstool of all the world than lack the smallest degree of it. The Spirit of Prayer by William Law, Part II, p. 73, Edition of Moreton, Canterbury, 1893.

Note B

We need to know two things. 1. That our salvation consists wholly in being saved from ourselves, or that which we are by nature. 2. That in the whole nature of things, nothing could be this salvation or savior to us but the humility of God, which is beyond all expression. Hence, the first unalterable term of the Savior to fallen man is: Except a man denies himself, he cannot be My disciple. Self is the whole evil of fallen nature. Self-denial is our capacity of being saved. Humility is our savior. Self is the root, the branches, and the tree, of all the evil of our fallen state. All the evils of fallen angels and men have their birth in the pride of self. On the other hand, all the virtues of the heavenly life are the virtues of humility. It is humility alone that makes the unpassable gulf between heaven and hell. What is then, or in what lies, the great struggle for eternal life? It all lies in the strife between pride and humility . Pride and humility are the two master powers, and the two kingdoms in strife for the eternal possession of man. There never was, nor ever will be, more than one humility, and that is the one humility of Christ. Pride and self have the entirety of man, until man has his entirety from Christ. He therefore only fights the good fight whose strife is that the self-idolatrous nature, which he hath from Adam, may be brought to death by the supernatural humility of Christ brought to life in him. An Humble, Earnest, and Affectionate Address to the Clergy by William Law, p. 52.

Note C

To die to self, or to come from under its power, is not, cannot be done, by any active resistance we can make to it by the powers of nature. The one true way of dying to self is the way of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God. This is the truth and perfection of dying to self. For if I ask you what the Lamb of God means, must you not tell me that it is and means the

perfection of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God ? Must you not therefore say that a desire and faith of these virtues is an application to Christ, a giving up of yourself to Him, and the perfection of faith in Him? And then, because this inclination of your heart to sink down in patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God is truly giving up all that you are and all that you have from fallen Adam, it is perfectly leaving all you have to follow Christ. It is your highest act of faith in Him. Christ is nowhere but in these virtues. When they are there, He is in His own kingdom. Let this be the Christ you follow.

The spirit of divine love can have no birth in any fallen creature until that creature wills and chooses to be dead to self in patient, humble resignation to the power and mercy of God.

I seek for completeness in my salvation through the merits and mediation of the meek, humble, patient, and suffering Lamb of God, who alone has power to bring forth the blessed birth of these heavenly virtues in my soul. There is no possibility of salvation except in and by the birth of the meek, humble, patient, and resigned Lamb of God in our souls. When the Lamb of God has brought forth a real birth of His own meekness, humility, and full resignation to God in our souls, then it is the birthday of the spirit of love in our souls, which, whenever we attain it, will feast our souls with such peace and joy in God that it will blot out the remembrance of everything that we called peace or joy before.

This way to God is infallible. This infallibility is grounded in the twofold character of our Savior. 1. He is the Lamb of God, a principle of all meekness and humility in the soul. 2. He is the Light of heaven, and He blesses eternal nature, and turns it into a kingdom of heaven. When we are willing to get rest to our souls in meek, humble resignation to God, it is then that He, as the Light of God and heaven, joyfully breaks in upon us, turns our darkness into light, and begins that kingdom of God and of love within us, which will never have an end. See William Law's Wholly for God, pp. 84-102. [The whole passage deserves careful study, showing most remarkably how the continual sinking down in humility before God is, from man's side, the only way to die to self.] [1]

[1] [3] The whole dialogue has been published separately under the title Dying to Self: A Golden Dialogue , by William Law, with notes by Andrew Murray (Nisbet & Co.)

Note D

A Secret of Secrets: Humility the Soul of True Prayer. Until the spirit of the heart is renewed, until it is emptied of all earthly desires, and stands in habitual hunger and thirst after God, which is the true spirit of prayer; until then, all our prayer will be, more or less, only too much like lessons given to scholars, and we shall mostly say them only because we dare not neglect them. But don't be discouraged. Take the following advice, and then you may go to church without any danger of mere lip-labor or hypocrisy, although there should be a hymn or a prayer, whose language is higher than that of your heart. Do this: go to the church as the publican went to the temple; stand inwardly in the spirit of your mind in that form which he outwardly expressed, when he cast down his eyes, and could only say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Stand unchangeably, at least in your desire, in this form or state of heart. It will sanctify every petition that comes out of your mouth. When anything is read or sung or prayed that is more exalted than your heart is, if you make this an occasion of further sinking down in the spirit of the publican, you will then be helped, and highly blessed, by those prayers and praises which seem only to belong to a heart better than yours.

This, my friend, is a secret of secrets. It will help you reap where you have not sown, and be a continual source of grace in your soul. Everything that inwardly stirs in you, or outwardly happens to you, becomes a real good to you, if it finds or excites in you this humble state of mind. Nothing is in vain, or without profit to the humble soul. It stands always in a state of divine

growth; everything that falls on it is like a dew of heaven to it. Shut up yourself, therefore, in this form of humility. All good is enclosed in it. It is a water of heaven, that turns the fire of the fallen soul into the meekness of the divine life, and creates oil, out of which the love for God and man gets its flame. Be enclosed, therefore, always in it. Let it be as a garment wherewith you are always covered, and a girdle with which you are encompassed. Breathe nothing but in and from its spirit; see nothing but with its eyes; hear nothing but with its ears. Then, whether you are in the church or out of the church, hearing the praises of God or receiving wrongs from men and the world, all will be edification, and everything will help forward your growth in the life of God. The Spirit of Prayer by William Law, Part II, p. 121.

A Prayer for Humility

I will here give you an infallible guide. You can perform this experiment to verify the truth. It is this: retire from the world and all conversation, only for one month; neither write, nor read, nor debate anything with yourself. Stop all the former workings of your heart and mind, and with all the strength of your heart, stand all this month, as continually as you can, in the following form of prayer to God. Offer it frequently on your knees; but whether sitting, walking, or standing, be always inwardly longing and earnestly praying this one prayer to God: That of His great goodness He would make known to you, and take from your heart, every kind and form and degree of pride, whether it be from evil spirits, or your own corrupt nature; and that He would awaken in you the deepest depth and truth of that humility, which can make you capable of His light and Holy Spirit. Reject every thought, but that of waiting and praying in this matter from the bottom of your heart, with such truth and earnestness, as people in torment wish to pray and be delivered from it. If you can, and will give yourself up in truth and sincerity to this spirit of prayer, I will venture to declare that, if you had twice as many evil spirits in you as Mary Magdalene had, they will all be cast out of you, and you will be forced with her to weep tears of love at the feet of the holy Jesus. Ibid., p. 124.

Andrew Murray - A Brief Biography

Andrew Murray had a rich religious ancestry. His grandfather (Andrew) left the occupation of being a shepherd in order to work in the flour mills of Scotland. He was a godly man, and his deathbed prayers influenced his son John to enter the work of the ministry. John became an ordained minister in Scotland. John's younger brother, Andrew, became licensed in the Church of Scotland and was ordained by the Presbytery of Aberdeen. He became a missionary with the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.

While in South Africa, Andrew met the woman who would be come his wife – Maria Susanna Stegmann. She was of German ancestry, and her great-grandfather was a Huguenot who had been driven out of France when the Edict of Nantes, which had granted the French Protestants some religious liberty, was revoked. Andrew and Susanna's first son was named John, and their second son, Andrew, is the subject of this brief biography and the author of this book.

Andrew Murray was born in South Africa on May 9, 1828. His father often read stories of revivals to his family. When Andrew was ten years old, he and his brother John were sent to Scotland to be educated. They stayed with their uncle John, the Scottish minister. In 1840, William Burns, the revivalist, spoke in Aberdeen, Scotland. He stayed with their uncle John while there, and Burns' preaching, along with his long, impassioned prayers for revival and the salvation of the lost greatly impacted young Andrew.

Andrew and John went on to attend Marischal College in Aberdeen when Andrew was almost seventeen years old, from which they graduated with the master of arts degree in 1845. From there they studied theology and refreshed themselves in the Dutch language at the University of Utrecht in Holland. Rationalism was popular then. Mr. Murray in South Africa had written to his sons in Holland to be careful of the teaching. In a letter to his sons, dated April 23, 1845, he wrote: "You may soon hear sentiments broached among the students, and even by professors, on theological subjects which may startle you, but be cautious in receiving them, by whatever names or number of names they may be supported. Try to act like the noble Bereans (Acts 17:11). By studying your Bibles and your own hearts I doubt not, under the guidance of the blessed Spirit, you will be led into all truth. . . . Whatever books may be recommended to you, be sure not to neglect the study of the Holy Scriptures. This must be a daily exercise, and must be attended to with humility and much prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Reminiscent of George Whitefield and the Wesleys and their Holy Club at Oxford, the Murray brothers joined a similar group at the University of Utrecht. It was called Sechor Dabar (Remember the Word), and its purpose was "to promote the study of the subjects required for the ministerial calling in the spirit of the Revival." The members of this group were often mocked, but they desired to live fully for God. On May 9, 1848, John and Andrew Murray were ordained by the Hague Committee of the Dutch Reformed Church, and they returned to South Africa to begin their ministry work.

At the age of twenty-one, Andrew was given the responsibility of being the only minister in a 50,000 square-mile territory in remote South Africa. For weeks at a time, Andrew would ride on horseback to preach to the Dutch-speaking farmers. Andrew married Emma Rutherford, the daughter of an English pastor, in 1856. They had eight children together – four boys and four girls.

In 1860, Andrew Murray accepted the pastorate of a church in Worcester, South Africa, where they heard some speakers tell stories of revivals in North American and Europe. Murray and others prayed earnestly for revival, and experienced somewhat of a revival, though not as

Murray had expected. He became increasingly interested in sanctification and what is now commonly called "the holiness movement."

Andrew Murray became the pastor of a church in Cape Town in 1864, and then became a pastor in Wellington in 1877. Also in 1877, Murray traveled to the United States and spent five weeks learning about Sunday schools, Moody's revivals, and the Dutch Reformed Church in America. Murray also attended the Presbyterian Council in Scotland and spoke elsewhere throughout the land, including visits to Holland and Germany.

Murray returned to South Africa where he became increasingly involved in Christian education and in training people for ministry. Murray's speaking schedule over the past few years led to an interesting and influential time in his life. His voice toward the end of 1879 began to be strained, and this difficulty continued for about two years, where he was not often able to speak publicly. He would write out his message at times, and it would be read to the congregation by others. Andrew tried visiting various doctors, traveling to drier climates, and more, but his throat did not improve. He did spend more time studying and writing, though.

After finding only temporary and inadequate improvements, Andrew Murray began studying more about healing by faith. In 1881, Murray was in London. He had wanted to be able to go to Switzerland to visit with a man he had met earlier in life and who was now the head of an institute for faith healing. Murray learned that this man, Otto Stockmaier, was then in London. They met together and discussed biblical passages related to healing and faith. Stockmaier urged Murray to attend the meetings of an American, Dr. Boardman, who had written on the topic of healing by faith and who then had an institute in London. Murray visited the institute and remained there for three weeks. He was taught that healing by faith was not just to heal the body, but to help one on to holiness and a life of consecration to God.

Murray's voice improved, and he wrote and spoke much on healing by faith after that. He did occasionally have less serious voice trouble later in life at times, and seemed not to place such an emphasis on healing by faith for everyone, but his experience and study certainly caused him to believe in the power and possibility of healing by faith for the rest of his life.

Andrew Murray continued writing and speaking. He was a speaker at the famous annual holiness Keswick conference. He was chosen to be the moderator of his church synod six different times. He wrote over 200 books and pamphlets, many on holiness and the deeper life. His books include Absolute Surrender, Humility, Abide in Christ, The Deeper Christian Life, The School of Obedience, Waiting on God, The Ministry of Intercession, The New Life, With Christ in the School of Prayer, The Two Covenants and the Second Blessing, and more.

Andrew Murray spent his last moments on earth praying and rejoicing in the goodness of God. He passed from this life on January 18, 1917, at the age of eighty-eight.