



Preface

Three great motives urge us to humility. It suits one as a creature, as a sinner, as a believer. The first we see in the heavenly hosts, in unfallen man, in Jesus as Son of Man. The second appeals to us in our fallen state, and points out the only way through which we can return to our right place as human beings. In the third motive, 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 consummation of everlasting blessedness and adoration.

In our ordinary Christian teaching, the second aspect has been too exclusively put in the foreground, so that some have even gone to the extreme of saying that we must keep sinning if we are indeed to remain humble. Others have thought that the strength of self-condemnation is the secret of humility. And the Christian life has endured loss, because believers have not been distinctly guided to see that, even in our position as human beings, nothing is more natural and beautiful and blessed than to be nothing so that God may be all. It has not been made clear that it is not sin that humbles us 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 the lowest place before Him.

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In these meditations I have, for more than one reason, almost exclusively directed attention to the humility that becomes us as men and women. It is not only because the connection between humility and sin is so abundantly set forth in all our religious teaching. I believe that for the fullness of the Christian life it is indispensable that prominence be given to the other aspect. If Jesus is indeed to be our example in His lowliness, we need to understand the principles in which it was rooted. We must find the common ground on which we stand with Him, and in which our likeness to Him is to be attained. If we are indeed to be humble, not only before God but towards men, if humility is to be our joy, we must see that it is not only the mark of shame because of sin. It must also be seen, apart from all sin, as a covering with the very beauty and blessedness of heaven and of Jesus.

We shall see that, just as Jesus found His glory in taking the form of a servant, He said to us also, "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11). He simply taught us the blessed truth that there is nothing so divine and heavenly as being the servant and helper of all. The faithful servant, who recognizes his position, finds real pleasure in supplying the wants of his master or his guests. When we see that humility is something infinitely deeper than contrition, and accept it as our participation in the life of Jesus, we will begin to learn that it is our true nobility. We will begin to understand that being servants of all is the highest fulfillment of our destiny, as men and women created in the image of God.

When I look back upon my own religious experience, or on the church of Christ in the world, I stand amazed at the thought of how seldom humility is sought after as the distinguishing feature of the discipleship of Jesus. In preaching and living, in the daily activities of the home and social life, in the more special fellowship with Christians, in the direction and performance of work for Christ, there is much evidence that humility is not considered the principal virtue. It is not considered the only root from which the graces can grow, the one indispensable condition of true fellowship with Jesus. The accusation that those who claim to be seeking higher holiness have not always done so with increased humility should be a loud call to earnest Christians. If there is any truth to the charge, it is up to fervent Christians to prove that meekness and lowliness of heart are the chief characteristics by which they follow the meek and humble Lamb of God.

Chapter 1.

Humility: The Glory of the Creature

"The four and twenty elders...cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

—Revelation 4:10-11

When God created the universe, it was with one objective: to make man the partaker of His perfection and blessedness, and to show forth in him the glory of His love and 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 He did not give man something he could possess in himself, certainly not life or goodness over which he had control or use whenever he pleased. 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 (Col. 1:17). Therefore, the relationship of man to God could only be one of unceasing, absolute, universal dependence. As truly as God once created by His power, so truly He must by that same power, maintain, every moment. Man has only to look back to the origin and beginning of existence to understand that he owes everything to God. His chief care, his highest virtue, his only happiness through all eternity is to present himself as an empty vessel in which God can dwell and manifest His power and goodness.

The life God bestows is imparted not once for all, but each moment, continuously, by the unceasing operation of His mighty power. Humility, the place

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of entire dependence on God, is, from the very nature of things, the first duty and the highest virtue of man. It is the root of every virtue.

And so pride, or the loss of this humility, is the root of every sin and evil. When the now fallen angels began to look upon themselves with self-satisfaction, they were led to disobedience, and were thus cast down from the light of heaven into outer darkness. When the serpent breathed the poison of his pride--the desire to be like God, i.e. "*knowing good and evil*" (Gen. 3:5)--into the hearts of our first parents, they too fell from their high position into all the wretchedness in which man has now sunk. In heaven and on earth, pride and self-exaltation are the gate and the curse of hell.

Hence it follows that nothing can redeem us but the restoration of our lost humility, the original and only true relationship of man to God. And so Jesus came to bring humility back to earth, to make us partakers of 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"(Phil. 2:8); His humility gave His death its value, and so became our redemption. And now the salvation He imparts is nothing less and nothing else than a communication of His own life and death. It is also His own disposition and spirit, His own humility, that are the foundation and root of His relationship to God and His redeeming work. Jesus Christ took the place and fulfilled the destiny of man by His life of perfect humility. His humility is our salvation. His salvation is our humility.

And so the lives of the saved ones, the saints, must bear this stamp of deliverance from sin and full restoration to their original state. Their whole relationship to God and man must be marked by an all-pervading humility. Without this there can be no true abiding in God's presence, or the experience of His favor and the power of His Spirit. Without humility, there is no abiding faith, or love or joy or strength. Humility is the only soil in which the graces take root; the lack of humility is sufficient explanation for every defect and failure. Humility is not so much a grace or virtue along with others; it is the root of all, because it alone assumes the right attitude before God and allows Him as God to do all.

God gave us the ability to reason. Therefore, the more true the insight into the real nature or the absolute need of a command, the more ready and fuller will be our obedience to it. The call to humility has not been highly regarded in the Church because its true nature and importance has been too little apprehended. It is not something that we bring to God, or that He bestows. It is simply the

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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. Man must realize that humility is the true nobility and consent to it with his will, his mind, and his affections. He must also realize that he is the vessel in which the life and glory of God are to work and manifest themselves. Then he will see that humility is simply acknowledging the truth of his position as created man, yielding to God His place.

In the lives of earnest Christians, those who pursue and profess holiness, humility ought to be the primary characteristic of their uprightness. It is often said that this is not so. One reason may be that, in the teaching and example of the church, humility has never had that place of supreme importance that it deserves. This results from the neglect of this truth: that although sin is a strong motive to humility, another motive is a still wider and mightier influence—that makes the angels, that which made Jesus, that which makes the holiest of saints in heaven so humble. That is, that the first and chief mark of the relationship of man with God, the secret of his blessedness, is the humility and nothingness that 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 must be the distinguishing feature of the disciple as it was of the Master. Such humility is not a thing that will come on its own. It must be made the object of special desire, prayer, faith and practice. As we study God's Word, we shall see that Jesus gave very distinct and often-repeated instructions to His disciples on this point.

We shall also see how slow they were in understanding Him. At the very beginning of our study, let us admit that there is nothing so natural to man, nothing so insidious and hidden from our sight, nothing so difficult and dangerous as pride. It will be only through a very determined and persevering waiting on God and Christ that we will discover how lacking we are in the grace of humility, and how powerless we are to obtain it. 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 powerlessness to cast it out, Jesus Christ Himself will come in to impart this grace as a part of His wondrous life within us.

Chapter 2.

Humility: The Secret of Redemption

*"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
Who... made himself of no reputation, and took upon him
the form of a servant...He humbled himself, and became
obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him."

—Philippians 2:5-9

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 can help us greatly to understand both the need and the nature of the redemption that is in Jesus.

Man's Need for Redemption

We must first understand the need for redemption. When the Old Serpent, he who had been cast out from heaven for his pride, whose whole nature as the devil was pride, spoke his words of temptation into the ear of Eve, his words carried with them the very poison of hell. And when she listened, and yielded her desire and her will to the prospect of being like God - knowing good and evil - that poison entered into her soul and blood and life. It destroyed forever the blessed humility and dependence on God that would have been our everlasting happiness. Instead of this, her life, and the life of the human race that sprang from her, became corrupted to its very root with that most terrible of all sins and all curses - the poison of Satan's own pride.

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All the wretchedness of this world has its origin in what this cursed, hellish pride, either our own, or that of others, has brought us. It has brought us wars and bloodshed among the nations, all its selfishness and suffering, all its ambitions and jealousies, all its broken hearts and embittered lives, and all its daily unhappiness. It is pride that made redemption necessary. Above everything, we need to be redeemed from our pride. And our insight into the need of redemption will largely depend upon our knowledge of the terrible nature of the power that has entered our being.

The power that Satan brought from hell, and cast into man's life, is working daily, hourly, with mighty power throughout the world. Men suffer from it; they fear and fight and flee it; and yet they don't know where it comes from, or from where it gets its terrible power. No wonder they do not know where or how it can be overcome.

Pride has its root and strength in a terrible spiritual power, outside of us as well as within us. We must confess it, deplore it, and be aware of its satanic origin. This may lead us to utter despair of ever conquering or casting it out. But it may also lead us more quickly to the only supernatural power in which our deliverance is to be found—the redemption of the Lamb of God. The hopeless struggle against the workings of self and pride within us may indeed become still more hopeless as we think of the power of darkness behind it all. This utter despair will also better prepare us to realize and accept a power and a life outside of ourselves—the humility of heaven that was brought down by the Lamb of God to cast out Satan and his pride.

Just as we need to look to the first Adam and his fall to understand the power of the sin within us, we also need to know the Second Adam and His power to give us an inner life of humility, real and abiding and as overmastering as pride has been. Our lives are from and in Christ as truly, even more truly, than from and in Adam. We are to walk *"rooted in Him"* (Col. 2:7), *"holding fast the Head from whom the whole body increaseth with the increase of God"* (v. 19).

The life of God, which entered human nature through the incarnation, is the root in which we are to stand and grow; it is the same almighty power that worked there, and from then onward to the resurrection, which works daily in us. Our one need is to study and know and trust the life that has been revealed in Christ as the life that is now ours. It waits for our consent to gain possession and mastery of our entire beings.

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In this context, it is of inconceivable importance that we have a correct understanding of who Christ is. We should properly comprehend what really constitutes Him, the Christ, and especially what may be counted as His chief characteristic - the root and essence of all His character as our Redeemer. There can be only 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? And what is His atonement but humility? *"He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death"* (Phil. 2:8). And what is His ascension and His glory, but humility exalted to the throne and crowned with glory? *"He humbled Himself... Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him"* (Phil. 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, it is 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 and serve and save us. In the same way that the love and condescension of God makes Him the benefactor and helper and servant of all, so Jesus of necessity was the Incarnate Humility. Even now, in the midst of the throne, He is still the meek and lowly Lamb of God.

The Nature of Redemption through Christ

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

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

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I earnestly plead with my reader to take note of the lack of humility within yourself or around you. Pause and ask whether or not you see much of the spirit of the meek and lowly Lamb of God in those who are called by His name. Consider the lack of love, the indifference to needs, to the feelings and weakness of others. Think about all the sharp and hasty judgments and statements that are so often excused as being straightforward and honest. And what about all the manifestations of temper and irritation, the feelings of bitterness and estrangement? All these have their root in nothing but pride. Pride seeks only self.

Devilish pride creeps in almost everywhere. What would happen if believers were to become permanently guided by the humility of Jesus? Oh for the humility of Jesus in myself and everyone around me! Let us honestly fix our hearts on our own lack of the humility which has been revealed in the likeness of Christ's life, and in the whole character of His redemption. Only then will we begin to feel as if we had never yet really known what Christ and His salvation are.

Dear believer! Study the humility of Jesus. This is the secret, the hidden root of your redemption. Sink down more deeply into it day by day. Believe with your whole heart that Christ, whom God has given us, will work in us, making us what the Father wants us to be.

Chapter 3.

Humility in the Life of Jesus

"I am among you as he that serveth."

—Luke 22:27

In the Gospel of John, the inner life of our Lord is laid open to us. Jesus spoke frequently of His relationship to the Father, of the motives by which He was guided, and of His consciousness of the power and spirit in which He acted. Though the word *humble* does not occur in John's Gospel, there is no other place in Scripture where His humility is so clearly revealed.

We have already said that this grace is, in truth, nothing but man's simple consent to let God be all, surrendering himself to God's work alone. In Jesus, we will see how both as the Son of God in heaven, and as man on earth, He took the place of entire subordination. He gave God the honor and the glory that are due to Him. And what He taught so often was true of Himself. *"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted"* (Luke 18:14) As it is written, *"He humbled Himself...Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him"* (Phil. 2:8,9)

Listen to the words our Lord spoke about His relationship to the Father, and see how unceasingly He used the word *not*, and *nothing*, of Himself. The *"not I"* (Gal. 2:20), 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 mine own self do nothing...My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will" (John 5:30).

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"I receive not honour from men." (John 5:41).

"I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will" (John 6:38).

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

"I am not come of Myself" (John 7:28).

"I do nothing of Myself" (John 8:28).

"neither came I of myself, but he sent me" (John 8:42).

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

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

"The word which ye hear is not mine" (John 14:24).

These words open to us the deepest roots of Christ's life and work. They tell us how the Almighty God was able to work His mighty redemptive work through Him. They show how important Christ counted the state of heart which became Him as the Son of the Father. They teach us the essential nature and life of the redemption which Christ accomplished and now communicates. It is this: Christ was nothing, that God might be all. He resigned Himself, His will and His powers entirely for the Father to work in Him. Of His own power, His own will, His own glory, of His whole mission with all His works and teaching, He said, "It is not I; I am nothing; I have given Myself to the Father to work; I am nothing, the Father is all."

Christ found this life of entire self-renunciation, of absolute submission and dependence upon the Father's will, to be one of perfect peace and joy. He lost nothing by giving everything to God. God honored His trust, and did all for Him, and then exalted Him to His own right hand in glory. And because Christ had thus humbled Himself before God, and God was ever before Him, 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 the Father to do in Him what He pleased, no matter what men around might say of Him or do to Him.

It is in this state of mind, in this spirit and disposition, that the redemption of Christ has its virtue and effectiveness. It is to bring us to this disposition that we are made partakers of Christ. This is the true self-denial to which our Saviour calls us, the acknowledgment that self has nothing good in it, except as an empty vessel which God must fill, and that its claim to be or do anything may not be

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allowed, even for a moment. It is in this, above and before everything, that the conformity to Jesus consists. It is the being and doing nothing by ourselves, that God may be all.

Here we have the root and nature of true humility. It is because this is not understood or sought after, that our humility is so superficial and so feeble. We must learn of Jesus, how He is “*meek and lowly of heart*” (Matt. 11:29). He teaches us where true humility takes its rise and finds its strength—in the knowledge that it is God who “*worketh all in all*” (1 Cor. 12:6), that our place is to yield to Him in perfect resignation and dependence, in full consent to be and to do nothing of ourselves. This is the life Christ came to reveal and to impart—a life in God that comes through death to sin and self.

If we feel that this life is too high for us and beyond our reach, it should urge us more to seek it in Him. It is the indwelling Christ who will live in us this meek and lowly life. If we long for this, let us, in the meantime and above everything, seek the holy secret of the knowledge of the nature of God as He every moment works all in all. The secret - of which all nature and every person and above all, every child of God, is to be the witness- is that he 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 virtue and grace, of all faith and acceptable worship, is that we know that we have nothing but what we receive, and bow in deepest humility to wait upon God for it.

Jesus was just as humble in His fellowship with men as with God because His humility was not just a temporary sentiment, awakened and activated only when He thought of God, but the very spirit of His whole life. He considered Himself the Servant of God for the man whom God made and loved. As a natural consequence, He counted Himself the Servant of men so that through Him God could do His work of love. He never for a moment thought of seeking His own honor or asserting His power to vindicate Himself. His whole spirit was that of a life yielded to God so that God might work in it.

We Christians must study the humility of Jesus and see that it is the very essence of His redemption, the very blessedness of the life of the Son of God. We must see it as the only true relationship He has with the Father and that which Jesus must give us if we are to have any part with Him. The terrible lack of humility will then become a burden to us. Our ordinary religion will be set aside to acquire humility, which is the first and foremost mark of the Christ within us.

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Are you clothed with humility? Look closely at your daily life. Ask Jesus. Ask your friends. Ask the world. And begin to praise God that there is opened up to you in Jesus a heavenly humility of which you have hardly known, through which a heavenly blessedness you possibly have never yet tasted can come in to you.

Chapter 4.

Humility in the Teaching of Jesus

"Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart."

—Matthew 11:29

"And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

—Matthew 20:20

We have seen the humility in the life of Christ, as He laid open His heart to us. Let us now look at His teaching. There we shall see how He spoke of it, and how far He expects men, and especially His disciples, to be humble as He was. Let us carefully study the passages, which I can do little more than quote, to receive the full impression of how often and how earnestly He taught it. It may help us to realize what He asks of us.

What Jesus Taught about Humility

- *The Blessings of Heaven and Earth*

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

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- *Perfect Rest for the Soul*

"Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Matt. 11:29). Jesus offered Himself as Teacher. He told us about the Spirit we shall find in Him as Teacher from Whom we can learn and receive. Meekness and lowliness are the things He offers us; in these we will find perfect rest of soul. Humility is to be our salvation.

- *Greatness in the Kingdom*

The disciples had been arguing about who would be the greatest in the kingdom, and had agreed to ask the Master (Matthew 18:1). He set a child in their midst, and said, *"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt. 18:4). "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" The question is indeed a far-reaching one. What will be the chief distinction in the heavenly kingdom? Only Jesus would have given this answer. The chief glory of Heaven, the true heavenly-mindedness, the chief of the graces is humility. *"He that is least among you all, the same shall be great"* (Luke 9:48).

- *The Standard of Glory*

The sons of Zebedee had asked Jesus to sit on His right and left, the highest place 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 servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister"* (Matt. 20:27-28). Humility, as it is the mark of Christ the heavenly, will be the one standard of glory in heaven. The lowliest is the nearest to God. The prime position in the church is promised to the humblest.

- *The Only Way to Honor*

Speaking to the multitude and the disciples about the Pharisees and their love of the chief seats, Christ said once again (Matthew 23:11). *"He that is greatest among you shall be your servant"* (Matt. 23:11). Humiliation is the only ladder to honor in God's kingdom.

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- *The Self-Abased Are Exalted*

On another occasion, in the house of a Pharisee, He spoke the parable of the guest who would be invited to come up higher (Luke 14:1-11), and added, "*For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*" (v. 11). The demand is unchangeable; there is no other way. Self-abasement alone will be exalted.

- *Worship in Humility*

After the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Christ spoke again (Luke 18:14), "*For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*" In the temple and presence and worship of God, everything is worthless that is not pervaded by deep, true humility towards God and men.

- *The Essential Element of Discipleship*

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

- *The Path in Which Jesus Walked*

At the Holy Supper table, the disciples still disputed who should be the greatest (Luke 22:26, 27). Jesus said, "*He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. I am among you as he that serveth.*" The path in which Jesus walked, and which He opened up for us, the power and spirit in which He brought about our salvation, and to which He saves us, is always the humility that makes me the servant of all.

Becoming a Servant of All

How little humility is preached. How little it is practiced. The lack of it is seldom felt or confessed. I do not say, how few attain some recognizable measure of likeness to Jesus in His humility. Rather, how few ever think of making it a distinct object of continual desire or prayer. How little the world has seen it. How little has it been seen even in the inner circle of the Church.

"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." God wants us to believe that Jesus means this! We all know what the character of a faithful

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servant or slave implies: devotion to the master's interests, thoughtful study and care to please him, delight in his prosperity and honor and happiness. There are servants on earth in whom these dispositions have been seen, and to whom the name of servant has never been anything but a glory.

To how many of us has it been a new joy in the Christian life to know that we may yield ourselves as servants, as slaves to God, and find that His service is our highest liberty,—the liberty from sin and self? We need now to learn another lesson—that Jesus calls us to be servants of one another, and that, as we accept it heartily, this service will also be a most blessed one. It will be a new and fuller liberty from sin and self. At first it may appear hard; this is only because of the pride which still counts itself something.

Once we learn that to be nothing before God is our glory, the spirit of Jesus, the joy of heaven, we shall welcome with whole heartedly the discipline we may have in serving even those who try to vex us. When our own heart is set upon this, the true sanctification, we shall study each word of Jesus on self-abasement with new zest. No place will be too low, and no stooping too deep, and no service too lowly or too long, if we may only share in the fellowship with Him who said, "*I am among you as he that serveth*" (Luke 22:27).

Brothers and sisters, here is the path to the higher life: Down, lower down! This was what Jesus always said to those 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 exaltation; that is God's work. See to it that you abase and humble yourselves, and take no place before God or man but that of servant. That is your work. Let that also be your one purpose and prayer. God is faithful. Just as water always seeks to fill the lowest place, so the moment God finds people humble and empty, His glory and power flow in to exalt and to bless. He who humbles himself, and this must be our one care, shall be exalted. That is God's care. 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 noble and bold and manly. Oh, that all would believe that this is the nobility of the kingdom of heaven! If only they would believe that this is the royal spirit that the King of heaven displayed, that it is God-like to humble oneself, to become the servant of all! This is the path to gladness and the glory of Christ's presence ever in us, His power ever resting on us.

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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 heart is filled with the thought: My one need is humility. And let us believe that what He shows, He gives; what He is, He imparts. As the meek and lowly One, He will come in and dwell in the longing heart.

Chapter 5.

Humility in the Disciples of Jesus

"Let him that is chief among you be as he that doth serve."

—Luke 22:26

We have studied humility in the person and teaching of Jesus. Let us now look for it in the circle of His chosen companions—the twelve apostles. If it is absent in them, the contrast between Christ and men is brought out more clearly, and it will help us to appreciate the mighty change that Pentecost brought about in them. It will prove how real our participation can be in the perfect triumph of Christ's humility over the pride Satan had breathed into man.

In the Scriptures quoted from the teaching of Jesus, we have already seen the occasions in which the disciples proved how entirely lacking they were in the grace of humility. At one point, they had been arguing about which of them should be the greatest. At another time, the sons of Zebedee, along with their mother, had asked for the first places—the seat on the right hand and the left. Later on, at the Last Supper, there was again a contention over who should be considered the greatest. Not that there were not moments when they indeed humbled themselves before the Lord. So it was with Peter when he cried out, *"Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man"* (Luke 5:8). The disciples also fell down and worshiped Him who had stilled the storm. But these occasional expressions of humility only bring into stronger relief the habitual tone of their minds. This was shown in the natural and spontaneous revelation, given at other times, of the place and power of self. The study of the meaning of all this will teach us very important lessons.

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Recognizing Our Underlying Pride

First, we learn how much there may be of active and earnest religion while observing its sad lack of humility. We can see it in the disciples. They had a fervent attachment to Jesus. They had forsaken all to follow Him. The Father had revealed to them that He was the Christ of God. They believed in Him, loved Him, and obeyed His commands. When others turned away, they clung to him. They were ready to die with Him. But deeper than all this, there was the dark power of pride - the existence and the hideousness of which they were hardly conscious - that had to be slain and cast out before they could be the witnesses of the power of Jesus to save. It is still true today. We may find professors, ministers, evangelists, workers, missionaries and teachers in whom many of the gifts of the Spirit are clearly seen. These people are a great blessing to multitudes. But, when a testing time comes, or when fuller knowledge results from closer fellowship, it is painfully obvious that the abiding characteristic of humility is rarely seen. All this tends to confirm the lesson that humility is one of the chief and highest graces. It is one of the most difficult to attain, and one to which our first and greatest efforts ought to be directed. It is a grace that only comes in power, when the fullness of the Spirit makes us partakers of the indwelling Christ, and when He lives within us.

Putting Off Personal Effort

Second, we learn how weak all external teaching and all personal effort is in the conquering of pride or in the obtaining of a meek and lowly heart. The disciples had been in the training school of Jesus for three years. The chief lesson He wished to teach them was: "*Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*" (Matt. 11:29).

Time after time He had spoken to them, to the Pharisees, to the multitudes, of humility as the only path to the glory of God. He had not only lived before them as the Lamb of God in His divine humility, but had more than once revealed to them the inner most secret of His life: "*The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve*" (Mark 10:45); "*I am among you as one that serveth*" (Luke 22:27).

He had washed their feet, and told them they were to follow His example. And yet they had learned very little. At the Holy Supper, there was still a contention about who should be greatest. They had doubtless often tried to learn His lessons, and firmly resolved not to grieve Him again. But it was all in vain. The much-needed lesson is that no outward instruction, not even of Christ Himself - no argument,

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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, he enters afresh in a mightier, though more hidden power. Nothing can avail but this: the new nature, in its divine humility, must be revealed in power to take the place of the old, to become as truly our very nature as the old ever was.

Taking Hold of the Indwelling Christ

Third, we see that only by the indwelling of Christ in His divine humility do we become truly humble. Our pride comes from another, from Adam; we must also have our humility from Another. Pride is ours, and it rules in us with such terrible power, because it is ourself. It is our very nature. Humility must be ours in the same way; it must be our very self, our very nature. As natural and easy as it has been to be proud, it must be, it will be, to be humble. The promise is, "*Where,*" even in the heart, "*sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly*" (Rom. 5:20). All that Christ taught His disciples, and all their vain efforts, were the necessary preparation for His entering into them in divine power, to give and be in them what He had taught them to desire.

In His death, Christ destroyed the power of the devil; He put away sin, and He brought about an everlasting redemption. In His resurrection, He received from the Father an entirely new life. It was a life lived in the power of God, capable of being communicated to men, and of entering, renewing, and filling their lives with His divine power. In His ascension, He received the Spirit of the Father, through whom He might do what He could not do while on earth: make Himself one with those He loved, and actually live their life for them. Then they could live before the Father in humility like His, because it was He Himself who lived and breathed in them. And on the day of 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. And the lives and the epistles of James and Peter and John bear witness that everything was changed, and that the spirit of the meek and suffering Jesus had indeed possession of them.

What shall we say to these things? I am sure there is more than one class among my readers. There may be some who have never yet thought very much about the matter, and cannot at once realize its immense importance as a life question for the Church and its every member. There are others who have felt condemned for their shortcomings, and have put forth very earnest efforts, only

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to fail and be discouraged. Others, again, 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 testify that in regard to this grace, too, the Lord has given deliverance and victory, while He has taught them how much they still need and may expect out of the fullness of Jesus.

To whichever class we belong, I emphasize the pressing need for each of us to seek a still deeper conviction of the unique place that humility holds in becoming like Christ. We must understand the utter impossibility of the church or the believer in being what Christ would have them be, as long as His humility is not recognized as His chief glory, His first command, and our highest blessedness. Let us consider seriously how far advanced the disciples were while this grace was still so terribly lacking. Let us pray to God that other gifts may not so satisfy us, that we never grasp the fact that the absence of this grace is the reason 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 in the experience 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.

Chapter 6.

Humility in Daily Life

"He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

—1 John 5:20

What a solemn thought, that our love for God will be measured by our everyday relationships with men and the love it displays. How solemn the thought that our love for God will be found to be a delusion, unless its truth is proved in the test of daily life with our fellow-men. It is the same with our humility. It is easy to think we humble ourselves before God. Yet humility toward 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 abode in us and become our very nature- that we actually, like Christ, have made ourselves "*of no reputation*" (Phil.2:7). When in the presence of God lowliness of heart has become not a posture we assume for a time, or when we think of Him or pray to Him, but the very spirit of our life, it will be revealed in all our behavior toward others.

This lesson is one of deep importance. The only humility that is really ours is not that which we try to show before God in prayer, but that which we carry with us in our ordinary conduct. The insignificances of daily life are the tests of eternity because they prove what spirit really possesses 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.

Is this not what Jesus taught? He taught about humility when the disciples argued over who should be the greatest. He taught about it when He saw how

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the Pharisees loved the chief place at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues. He taught about it when He had given them the example of washing their feet. Humility before God is nothing if not proved in humility before men.

Paul also taught about humility. To the Romans he writes: *"In honor preferring one another"* (Rom. 12:10). *"Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to those that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits"* (v.16). To the Corinthians: "Love," and there is no love without humility as its root, *"vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not its own, is not provoked"* (I Cor. 13:5-5). To the Galatians: *"by love serve one another"* (Gal. 5:13). *"Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another"* (v.26) To the Ephesians, immediately after the three wonderful chapters on the heavenly life: *"Therefore...walk...with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love"* (Eph.4:1-2); *"Giving thanks always... submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God"* (Eph. 5:20-21). To the Philippians: *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves"* (Phil. 2:3); *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:...who...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and...humbled himself"* (Phil. 2:5-8). And to the Colossians: *"Put on...mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing on another and forgiving one another...even as Christ forgave you"* (Col. 3:12-13).

It is in our relationships to one another, in our treatment of one another, that the true lowliness of mind and the humility of heart are to be seen. Our humility before God has no value unless it prepares us to reveal the humility of Jesus to our fellowmen. Let us now study humility in daily life in the light of these words.

The humble man seeks at all times to act according to the rule, "In honor, prefer one another; be servants one of another; count others better than oneself; submit yourselves one to another." The question is often asked, how can we count others better than ourselves when we see that they are far below us in wisdom and holiness, in natural gifts, or in grace received. The question 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, have consented to part with and cast away self, and to let God be all. The soul who has done this, and can say, "So have I lost myself in finding Thee," no longer compares itself with others. It has given up forever every thought of self in God's presence; it meets its fellow-men as one who is nothing, and seeks nothing for itself. It is a

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servant of God, and for His sake a servant of all. A faithful servant may be wiser than the master, and yet retain the true spirit and posture of the servant.

The humble man looks upon every child of God, even the most feeble and unworthy, 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 indeed the least, to be servants one of another.

The humble man feels no jealousy or envy. He can praise God when others are preferred and blessed 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 be nothing*" (2 Cor. 12:11). He has received the spirit of Jesus, who did not please Himself, and did not seek His own honor, as the spirit of his life.

Amid what are considered the temptations to impatience and touchiness, to hard thoughts and sharp words—which come from the failings and sins of fellow-Christians—the humble man carries the oft-repeated counsel in his heart, and shows it in his life, "*Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another...even as the Christ forgave you*" (Col. 3:13). He has learned that in 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 consist merely in thoughts or words of self-depreciation, but in a heart of humility. It is a heart 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, the noble virtues, such as boldness, joy, contempt for the world, zeal, and self-sacrifice. Even the old Stoics taught and practiced these. In the meantime, the deeper, gentler, the more divine and more heavenly graces which Jesus first taught upon earth, are scarcely thought of or valued. This is because He brought them from heaven, those which are more distinctly connected with His cross and the death of self: poverty of spirit, meekness, humility, and lowliness. Therefore, let us put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering. Let us prove our Christ-likeness, not only in our zeal for saving the lost, but in our conduct with all our fellowmen, bearing with and forgiving one another, even as the Lord forgave us (Col. 3:12-13).

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Fellow-Christians, let us study the Bible portrait of the humble man. And let us ask our fellow believers, and the world, whether they recognize in us the likeness to the original. Let us be content with nothing less than to take each of these texts as the promise of what God will work in us, as the revelation in words of what the Spirit of Jesus will birth within us. And let each failure and shortcoming simply urge us to turn humbly and meekly to the meek and lowly Lamb of God. Have full assurance that where He is enthroned in the heart, His humility and gentleness will be one of the streams of living water that flow within us.”

“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 am convinced that we have very little concept of how the Church suffers because of the lack of this divine humility, the nothingness that makes room for God to prove His power. Not long ago, an humble Christian with a loving spirit, who was acquainted with many mission stations of various societies, expressed his deep sorrow that, in some cases, the spirit of love and forbearance was sadly lacking. Men and women, who in Europe could each choose their own circle of friends, brought close together with others of uncongenial minds, find it hard to bear, to love, and to *“keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Eph. 4:3). And those who should have been fellow-helpers of each other's joy, become a hindrance and a weariness. And all for the one reason: the lack of the humility which counts itself nothing, which rejoices in becoming and being counted the least, and only seeks, like Jesus, to be the servant, the helper and comforter of others, even the lowest and most unworthy.

And why do men who have joyfully given up themselves for Christ find it so hard to give up themselves for their fellow believers? Is not the Church to blame? It has taken very little time to teach its members that the humility of Christ is the first of the virtues, the best of all the graces and powers of the Spirit. The church has taken very little time to prove that a Christlike humility is what the church places and preaches first, as did Christ, and that it is not only needed but

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possible. But let us not be discouraged. Let the discovery of the lack of this grace stir us to larger expectation from God. Let us look on every brother or sister who irritates or troubles us as God's means of grace. Let us look on him or her as God's instrument for our purification, for our exercise of the humility that Jesus, our Life, breathes within us. And let us have such faith in the All of God, and the nothing of self, that we may, in God's power, only seek to serve one another in love.

Chapter 7.

Humility and Holiness

*"Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near 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, of 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 to attain is truth and life, will be whether it produces increasing holiness. In man, humility is the one thing needed to allow God's holiness to dwell in him and shine through him. In Jesus, the Holy One of God who makes us holy, a divine humility was the secret of His life, His death, and His exaltation. The one infallible test of our holiness will be the humility before God and men which marks us. Humility is the bloom and the beauty of holiness.

The chief mark of counterfeit holiness is its lack of humility. Every seeker after holiness needs to be on guard, to prevent, unconsciously, what was begun in the spirit from being perfected in the flesh, and to keep pride from creeping in where its presence is least expected. *"Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, the other a publican [tax collector]"* (Luke 18:10). There is no place or position so sacred that the *"Pharisee"* cannot enter. Pride can lift its head into the very temple of God, and make His worship the scene of its self-exaltation.

Since the time Christ so exposed his pride, the Pharisee has put on the garb of the publican. The confessor of deep sinfulness, equally with the professor of the

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highest holiness, must also be watchful. Just when we are most anxious to have our heart be the temple of God, we shall find the two men coming up to pray. And the publican will find that his danger is not from the Pharisee beside him, who despises him, but the Pharisee within who commends and exalts. 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).

"God, I thank Thee, I am not as other men are...,or even as this publican" (Luke 18:11). It is in that which is just cause for thanksgiving, in the very thanksgiving which we offer to God, and in the very confession that God has done it all, that self finds its cause of complacency. Yes, even in the temple, when the language of penitence and trust in God's mercy alone is heard, the Pharisee may take up the note of praise, and in thanking God be congratulating himself. Pride can clothe itself in the garments of praise or of penitence.

Even though the words *"I am not as other men"* are rejected and condemned, their spirit may too often be found in our feelings and language towards our fellow-worshippers and fellow-men. If you want to know if this is really so, just listen to the way in which Churches and Christians often speak of one another. How little of the meekness and gentleness of Jesus is to be seen. There is very little remembrance that deep humility must be the keynote of what the servants of Jesus say of themselves or each other. Is there not many a Church or assembly of Christians, many a mission or convention, many a society or committee, even many a mission among the heathen where the harmony has been disturbed and the work of God hindered? Is it not because men who are considered saints have proved in their touchiness, haste, and impatience, in self-defense and self-assertion, in sharp judgments and unkind words, that they did not each consider others better than themselves, and that their holiness has very little in it of the meekness of the saints? *

* *"Me is a most exacting personage, requiring the best seat and the highest place for itself, and feeling grievously wounded if its claim is not recognized. Most of the quarrels among Christian workers arise from the clamoring of this gigantic Me. How few of us understand the true secret of taking our seats in the lowest rooms."*—Hannah Whitall Smith

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In their spiritual history, people may have had times of great humbling and brokenness, but what a different thing this is from being clothed with humility, and from having a humble spirit. How different this is from that lowliness of mind in which each counts himself the servant of others and so shows forth the very mind that was also in Jesus Christ.

“Come not near me; for I am holier than thou.” What a parody on holiness! Jesus the Holy One is the humble One. The holiest will always be the humblest. There is none holy but God (1 Sam. 2:2). We have as much of holiness as we have of God. And according to what we have of God will be our real humility, because humility is nothing but the disappearance of self in the vision that God is all. The holiest will be the humblest. Alas! Though the bare-faced boasting Jew of the days of Isaiah is not often found—even our manners have taught us not to speak in this way—how often his spirit is still seen, whether in the treatment of fellow believers or of the men and women of the world. In the spirit in which opinions are given, work is undertaken, and faults are exposed, how often the voice is still that of the Pharisee, though the garb is that of the publican: *“God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are”* (Luke 18:11).

Is there, then, any humility to be found, such that men will indeed still consider themselves *“less than the least of all saints”* (Eph. 3:8), the servants of all? There is. Love *“vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, ...seeketh not her own”* (1 Cor. 13:4-5). The power of a perfect love forgets itself and finds its blessedness in blessing others—in bearing with and honoring them, however feeble they may be. The power of this love is given where the spirit of love is poured out in the heart (Rom. 5:5), where the divine nature comes to a full birth, and where the Christ, the *“meek and lowly”* (Matt. 11:29) Lamb of God, is truly formed within. Where this love enters, God enters. And where God has entered in His power and reveals Himself as all, man becomes nothing. And where man becomes nothing before God, he cannot be anything but humble toward his fellowmen. The presence of God becomes not a thing of times and seasons, but the covering under which the soul always dwells. Its deep humility before God becomes the holy place of His presence from which all its words and works proceed.

May God teach us that our thoughts and words and feelings concerning our fellowmen are His test of our humility toward Him. May He teach us that our humility before him is the only power that can enable us to be always humble

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with our fellowmen. Our humility must be the life of Christ, the Lamb of God, within us.

Let all teachers of holiness, whether in the pulpit or on the platform, and all seekers after holiness, whether in the prayer closet or in the congregation, take warning. There is no pride so dangerous, none so subtle and insidious, as the pride of holiness. It is not that man ever says, or even thinks, "*Come not near me; for I am holier than thou!*" No, indeed, the thought would be regarded with abhorrence. But there grows up, all unconsciously, a hidden habit of soul that feels complacency in its attainments. It cannot help seeing how far it is in advance of others. It can be recognized, not always in any special self-assertion or self-exaltation, but simply in the absence of the deep self-abasement that is the mark of the soul that has seen the glory of God (Job 42:5-6; Isa. 6:5) It reveals itself, not only in words or thoughts, but in a tone—a way of speaking to others—in which those who have the gift of spiritual discernment cannot help but recognize the power of self. Even the world with its keen eyes notices it. The world points to it as a proof that the claim of a heavenly life does not bear any especially heavenly fruits.

Oh, brothers and sisters, let us beware! Unless we make the increase of humility our study, we may find that we have been delighting in beautiful thoughts and feelings, in solemn acts of consecration and faith, while the only sure mark of the presence of God—the disappearance of self—was missing the entire time. Come and let us flee to Jesus, and hide ourselves in Him until we are clothed with His humility. That alone is our holiness.

Chapter 8.

Humility and Sin

"Sinners, of whom I am chief"

—1 Timothy 1:15

Humility is often identified with penitence and contrition. As a consequence, there appears to be no way of fostering humility except by keeping the soul occupied with its sin. We have learned, I think, that humility is something else and something more. We have seen in the teaching of our Lord Jesus and the Epistles how often the virtue is taught without any reference to sin. In the very nature of things, in the whole relationship of man to the Creator and in the life of Jesus as He lived it and imparts it to us, humility is the very essence of holiness and of blessedness. It is the displacement of self by the enthronement of God. Where God is all, self is nothing.

But though it is this aspect of the truth I have felt it specially needful to press, I need scarce say what new depth and intensity man's sin and God's grace give to the humility of the saints. Though I have felt it necessary to emphasize this aspect of the truth, I hardly need to say what new depth and intensity man's sin and God's grace give to the humility of Christians. We need only to look at a man like the Apostle Paul to see how, through his life as a ransomed and holy man, persistently his deep consciousness of having been a sinner lives.

We all know the passages in which he refers to his life as a persecutor and blasphemer. *"I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God... I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me"* (1 Cor. 15:9,10). *"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is grace given, that I should*

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preach among the Gentiles" (Ephesians 3:8). "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am Chief" (1 Timothy 1:13,15).

God's grace had saved him; God remembered his sin no more forever; but never, never could Paul forget how terribly he had sinned. The more he rejoiced in God's salvation, and the more his experience of God's grace filled him with unspeakable joy, the clearer was his consciousness that he was a saved sinner. And he was more aware that salvation had no meaning or sweetness except as the sense of his being a sinner 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 Scriptures we have just quoted are often referred to as Paul's confession of daily sinning. One need only read them carefully in their context to see how little this is true. They have a far deeper meaning, and they refer to that which lasts throughout eternity. They refer to that which will give a deep undertone of amazement and adoration to the humility with which the ransomed bow before the throne, as those who have been washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb. Never, even in glory, can they be anything other than ransomed sinners. Never for a moment in this life can God's child live in the full light of His love without understanding that the sin out of which he has been saved is his one only right and title to all that grace has promised to do. The humility with which he first came as a sinner acquires a new meaning when he learns how it becomes him as a man. And then continually, the humility, in which he was born as a man, has its deepest, richest tones of adoration in the memory of what it is to be a monument of God's wondrous and redeeming love.

The true importance of what these expressions of St. Paul teach us comes out all the more strongly when we notice the remarkable fact that, throughout his whole Christian life, we never find him writing anything like confession of sin, even in those epistles in which we have the most intensely personal admissions,. Nowhere is there any mention of shortcoming or defect, nor any suggestion to his readers that he has failed in duty, or sinned against the law of perfect love.

On the contrary, there are many passages in which he vindicates himself in language that means nothing if it does not appeal to a faultless life before God and men. *"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and righteously, and unblameably we have behaved among you that believe:"* (1 Thessalonians 2:10).

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"Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity...we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you ward" (2 Corinthians 1:12). This is not an ideal or an inspiration; it is an appeal to what his actual life had been. However we may account for this absence of confession of sin, all will admit that it must point to a life in the power of the Holy Ghost, such as is but seldom realized or expected in these days.

The point that I wish to emphasize is this: the very fact of the absence of such confession only gives more force to the truth that it is not in daily sinning that the secret of the deeper humility will be found, but in the habitual, never-to-be-forgotten position, which just the more abundant grace will keep more distinctly alive. Our true place- the only place of blessing, our one abiding position before God- must be that of those whose highest joy it is to confess that they are sinners saved by grace.

Combined with Paul's deep remembrance of having sinned so terribly in the past, before grace had met him, and the consciousness of being kept from present sinning, there was always the abiding remembrance of the dark hidden power of sin that was ever ready to come in. It was kept out only by the presence and power of the indwelling Christ. *"In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing"* (Rom. 7:18). These words describe the flesh as it is to the end. The glorious deliverance of Romans 8:2 —*"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"*—is neither the annihilation 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, so the indwelling of Christ through the Spirit is the health and light and life of the soul. But with this, the conviction of helplessness and danger ever tempers the faith in the momentary and unbroken action of the Holy Spirit into that chastened sense of dependency, which makes the highest faith and joy the handmaids of a humility that only lives by the grace of God.

The three passages quoted above all show that it was the wonderful grace bestowed upon Paul, and of which he felt the need every moment, that humbled him so deeply. The grace of God that was with him enabled him to labor more abundantly than all others. It was the grace to preach to the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ, the grace that was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. It was this grace of which it is the very nature and glory that it is for sinners. It kept the consciousness of his having once

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sinned, and being liable to sin, so intensely alive. *"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"* (Rom. 5:20). This reveals how the very essence of grace is to deal with and take away sin, and how it must always be so. The more abundant the experience of grace, the more intense the consciousness of being a sinner. It is not sin, but God's grace constantly reminding a man what a sinner he was, that will keep him truly humble. It is not sin, but grace, that will make me indeed know myself a sinner, and make the sinner's place of deepest humility the place I never leave.

I fear that there are many who, by strong expression of self-condemnation and self-denunciation, have sought to humble themselves, but have to confess with sorrow that a humble spirit, a "heart of humility," with its accompanying kindness and compassion, meekness and forbearance, is still as far off as ever. Being occupied with self, even amid the deepest self-aborrence, can never free us from self. It is the revelation of God, not only by the law condemning sin, but by His grace delivering us from it, that will make us humble. The law may break the heart with fear. But it is only grace that works the sweet humility that becomes a joy to the soul as its second nature. It was the revelation of God in His holiness, drawing near to make Himself known in His grace, that made Abraham, Jacob, Job and Isaiah, bow so low. It is the soul in which God the Creator, as the All of man in his nothingness, God the Redeemer in His grace, as the All of the sinner in his sinfulness, waited for and trusted and worshipped, that will find itself so filled with His presence that there will be no place for self. It is only in this way that the promise can be fulfilled: "The haughtiness of man shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa. 2:17).

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

Chapter 9.

Humility and Faith

*"How can ye believe, which receive honour
one of another, and seek not the honour
that cometh from God only?"*

—John 5:44

In an address I recently heard, the speaker said that the blessings of the higher Christian life were often like the objects exposed in a shop window—one could see them clearly and yet could not reach them. If told to stretch out his hand and take, a man would answer, "I cannot; there is a thick pane of glass between me and them." In the same way, Christians may see clearly the blessed promises of perfect peace and rest, of overflowing love and joy, of abiding communion and fruitfulness, and yet feel that there was something between that hinders the true possession. And what might that be? Nothing but pride.

The promises made to faith are so free and sure; the invitations and encouragements so strong. The mighty power of God on which it may count is so near and free. It can only be something that hinders faith that keeps 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, which receive honour one from another?"* As we see how in their very nature pride and faith are irreconcilably at odds, we shall learn that faith and humility are one at the root. We shall also learn that we never can have more of true faith than we have of true humility. We shall also see that we may indeed have strong intellectual conviction and assurance of the truth while pride is kept in the heart, but that it makes the living faith, which has power with God, an impossibility.

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We need only think for a moment what faith is. Is it not the confession that we are nothing and helpless, surrendering and waiting to let God work? Is it not in itself the most humbling thing there can be—the acceptance of our place as dependents, who can claim or get or do nothing but what grace bestows? Humility is simply the disposition that prepares the soul for living on trust.

Even the most secret breathing of pride—in self-seeking, self-will, self-confidence, or self-exaltation—is just the strengthening of that self which cannot enter the kingdom, or possess the things of the kingdom, because it refuses to allow God to be what He is and must be there—the All in All.

Faith is the sense organ by which we perceive and understand 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, as long as we always seek and 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 Spirit of His cross. Salvation is union with and delight in, salvation is participation in, the humility of Jesus. Is it any wonder that our faith is so feeble when pride still reigns so much? Or that we have scarcely learned even to long or pray for humility as the most needful and blessed part of salvation?

Humility and faith are more nearly allied in Scripture than many know. See it in the life of Christ. There are two cases in which He spoke of a great faith. First, Jesus marveled at the faith of the centurion, saying, *"I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel!"* (Matt. 8:10). The centurion responded, *"I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof"* (Matt. 8:8). Secondly, the mother to whom He spoke, *"O woman, great is thy faith!"* accepted the name of dog, and said, *"Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table"* (Matt. 15:27,28). It is the humility that brings a soul to be nothing before God that also removes every hindrance to faith. Humility makes the soul fear that it would dishonor Him by not trusting Him wholly.

Dear fellow believers, do we not have here the cause of failure in the pursuit of holiness? Is it not this, though we did not know it, that made our consecration and our faith so superficial and so short-lived? We had no idea to what an extent pride and self were still secretly working within us, and how God alone, by His incommensurable and His mighty power, could cast them out. We did not understand how nothing but the new and divine nature, taking entirely the place of the old self,

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could make us really humble. We did not know that absolute, unceasing, universal humility must be the root disposition of every prayer and every approach to God, as well as of every dealing with our fellow man. We did not realize that we might as well attempt to see without eyes, or live without breath, as believe or draw near to God or dwell in His love, without an all-pervading humility and lowliness of heart.

Brothers and sisters, have we not been making a mistake in taking so much trouble to believe, while all the time there was the old self in its pride seeking 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: then He will exalt us. The cross, and 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 fervent prayer be to be humbled with Him and like Him. Let us gladly accept whatever can humble us before God or men—this alone is the path to the glory of God.

You may feel inclined to ask a question. I have spoken of some who have blessed experiences, or are the means of bringing blessing to others, and yet they are lacking in humility. You ask whether these do not prove that they have true, even strong faith, yet show too clearly that they still seek too much the honor that comes from men.

More than one answer can be given. But the principal answer in our present context is this: They indeed have a measure of faith, in proportion to which, with the special gifts bestowed upon them, is the blessing they bring to others. But in that very blessing the work of their faith is hindered through the lack of humility. The blessing is often superficial or transitory, just because they are not the nothing that opens the way for God to be all. A deeper humility would without doubt bring a deeper and fuller blessing. The Holy Spirit, not only working in them as a Spirit of power, but dwelling in them in the fullness of His grace, and specially that of humility, would communicate through them Himself to these converts for a life of power, holiness, and steadfastness of which we see too little.

"How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?" Brothers and sisters! Nothing can cure you of the desire to receive honor from men, or of the sensitivity and pain and anger that come when it is not given, except giving yourself to seek only 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

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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 the every desire of your Faith.

Chapter 10.

Humility and Death to Self

"He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death."

—Philippians 2:8

Humility is the path to death, because in death it gives the highest proof of its perfection. Humility is the blossom of which death to self is the perfect fruit. Jesus humbled Himself unto death, and opened the path in which we too must walk. As there was no way for Him to prove His surrender to God to the very uttermost, or to give up and rise out of our human nature to the glory of the Father but through death, so with us too. Humility must lead us to die to self. By this, we prove how wholly we have given ourselves up to it and to God; so alone we are freed from fallen nature, and find the path that leads to life in God, to that full birth of the new nature, of which humility is the breath and the joy.

We have spoken of what Jesus did for His disciples when He communicated His resurrection life to them, when in the descent of 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 death: in its inmost nature the life He imparted was a life out of death, a life that had been surrendered to death, and been won through death. He who came to dwell in them was Himself One who had been dead and now lives for evermore. His life, His person, His presence, bears the marks of death, of being a life begotten out of death.

That life in His disciples also always bears the death-marks; 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 chief mark of the dying of the Lord Jesus, of the

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death-marks that show the true follower of Jesus, is humility. For these two reasons, only humility leads to perfect death. Only death perfects humility. Humility and death are in their very nature one. Humility is the bud; in death the fruit is ripened to perfection.

Humility Leads to Perfect Death

Humility means the giving up of self and becoming 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 union 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 boundless 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 so often asked, and of which the meaning is so seldom clearly apprehended: 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 that is in you has gone through the process of death and resurrection; you may be sure you are indeed dead to sin. But the full manifestation of the power of this death, in your disposition and conduct, depends upon the measure in which the Holy Spirit imparts the power of the death of Christ. And here it is that the teaching is needed. If you want 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; consent sincerely to the fact that you are unable to slay or make yourself alive; sink down into your own nothingness, in the spirit of meek and patient and trustful surrender to God. Accept every humiliation, look upon every person who tries your patience or irritates you as a means of grace to humble you. Use every opportunity of humbling yourself before your fellowmen as a help to remain humble before God. God will accept such humbling of yourself as the proof that your whole heart desires it, as the very best prayer for it. He will accept it as your preparation for His mighty work of grace, when, by the mighty strengthening of His Holy Spirit, He reveals Christ fully in you. Then He, in His form as a servant, is truly formed in you, and dwells in your heart. It is the path of humility which leads to perfect death, the full and perfect experience that we are dead in Christ.

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Death Leads to Perfect Humility

Only this death leads to perfect humility. 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 reasonings and questionings, as to what true humility is to be and to do, that they never unreservedly yield themselves to it. Beware of this. Humble yourself to the point of death. It is in the death of self that humility is perfected. You can be sure that at the root of all real experience of more grace, of all true advance in consecration, of all actually increasing conformity to the likeness of Jesus, there must be a deadness to self that proves itself to God and men in our disposition and habits.

It is sadly possible to speak of the death-life and the Spirit-walk, while even the tenderest love cannot but see how much there is of self. The death to self has no surer deathmark than a humility which makes itself *“of no reputation”* (Phil. 2:7), which empties out itself, and takes the form of a servant. It is possible to speak much and honestly of fellowship with a *“despised and rejected”* Jesus, and of bearing His cross, while the meek and lowly, the kind and gentle humility of the Lamb of God is not seen, and is even scarcely sought. 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 never can overcome nature, not even with the help of grace. Self can never cast out self, even in the regenerate man. Praise God! the work has been done, and finished and perfected for ever. The death of Jesus, once and forever, is our death to self. And the ascension of Jesus, His entering once and forever into the Holiest, has given us the Holy Spirit to communicate to us in power, and makes the power of the death-life our very own. As the soul, in the pursuit and practice of humility, follows in the steps of Jesus, its consciousness of the need of something more is awakened. Its desire and hope is quickened, and its faith is strengthened. It learns to look up and claim and receive that true fullness of the Spirit of Jesus, which can daily maintain His death to self and sin in its full power, and make humility the all-pervading spirit of our life.

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 and is a giving up yourself to Him and the perfection of faith in Him? And then, because this

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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 completely 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, till it wills and chooses to be dead to all self, in a patient, humble resignation to the power and mercy of God.

"I seek for all my salvation through the merits and mediation of the meek, humble, patient, suffering Lamb of God, who alone hath power to bring forth the blessed birth of these heavenly virtues in my soul. There is no possibility of salvation but in and by the birth of the meek, humble, patient, resigned Lamb of God in our souls. When the Lamb of God hath 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, will feast our souls with such peace and joy in God as 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 Saviour: 1. As He is the Lamb of God, a principle of all meekness and humility in the soul; 2. As He is the Light of heaven, and 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, then it is 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 *Wholly for God*, [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.] The whole dialogue has been published separately under the title *Dying to Self. A Golden Dialogue*. By William Law. Everyone who would study and practice humility will find in this golden dialogue what it is that hinders our humility, how we are to be delivered from it, and what the blessing of the Spirit of Love is that comes to the humble from Christ, the meek and lowly Lamb of God.

"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3). *"Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord... Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead"* (vv.11,13). The

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whole self-consciousness of the Christian is to be permeated and characterized by the spirit that animated the death of Christ. He has ever to present himself to God as one who has died in Christ, and in Christ is alive from the dead. He bears in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. His life ever bears the two-fold mark: its roots striking in true humility deep into the grave of Jesus, the death to sin and self, its head lifted up in resurrection power to the heaven where Jesus is.

Believer, claim in faith the death and the life of Jesus as yours. Enter, in 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 upon 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 manifested in you. Let a willing, loving, restful, happy humility be the sign that you have indeed claimed your birthright—the baptism into the death of Christ. *"By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"* (Heb. 10:14). The souls that enter into His humiliation will find in Him the power to see and count self dead, and, as those who have learned and received of Him, to walk with all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love. The death-life is seen in a meekness and lowliness like that of Christ.

Chapter 11.

Humility and Happiness

*"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities,
that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I
take pleasure in infirmities...For when I am
weak, then am I strong."
—2 Corinthians 12:9,10*

Just in case Paul should exalt himself, by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations He had received from God, a thorn in the flesh was sent to keep him humble. Paul's first desire was to have it removed, and he asked the Lord three times that it might depart. The answer came that the trial was a blessing; that, in the weakness and humiliation it brought, the grace and strength of the Lord could be better manifested. Paul at once entered upon 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, of power, of joy.

Virtually every Christian passes through these two stages in his pursuit of humility. In the first stage, he fears and flees and seeks deliverance from all that can humble him. He has not yet learnt to seek humility at any cost. He has accepted the command to be humble, and seeks to obey it, only to find how utterly he fails. He prays for humility, at times very earnestly; but in his secret heart he prays more, if not in word, than 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 all to obtain it. In his pursuit of it, and in his prayer for it, there is still somewhat of a sense of burden

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and of bondage. To humble himself has not yet become the spontaneous expression of a life and a nature that are essentially humble. It has not yet become his joy and only pleasure. He cannot yet say, "Most gladly do I glory in weakness, I take pleasure in whatever humbles me."

But can we hope to reach the stage in which this will be the case? Undoubtedly. And what will it be that brings us there? That which brought Peter there—a new revelation of the Lord Jesus. Nothing but the presence of God can reveal and expel self. A clearer insight was to be 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 to learn the lessons the story of Paul teaches us.

We may have advanced believers, eminent teachers, 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 exalting himself was coming very near. He knew not yet perfectly what it was to be nothing, to die, that Christ alone might live in him, to take pleasure in all that brought him low. It appears as if this were the highest lesson that he had to learn—full conformity to his Lord in that self-emptying where he gloried in weakness that God might be all.

The highest 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 consecration, and fervent zeal 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 does not come by itself, but only as it is made a matter of special dealing on the part of our faithful Lord and His faithful servant.

Let us look at our lives in the light of this experience, and see whether we gladly glory in weakness, whether we take pleasure, as Paul did, in trials, in necessities, and distresses. Yes, let us ask whether we have learned to regard a reproof, just or unjust, a reproach from friend or enemy, an injury or trouble, or difficulty into which others bring us, as above all an opportunity to prove how Jesus is all to us. Have we learned how our own pleasure or honor are nothing, and how humiliation is in very truth what we take pleasure in. It is indeed blessed, the

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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 unutterable things he had heard in heaven—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. He watches over us with a jealous, loving care, "lest we exalt ourselves." When we are doing so, He seeks to reveal to us the evil and deliver us from it. In trial and weakness and trouble He seeks to bring us low, until we so learn that His grace is all, as to take pleasure in the very thing that brings us and keeps us low. His strength made perfect in our weakness, His presence filling and satisfying our emptiness, becomes the secret of a humility that need never fail. It can, as Paul, in full sight of what God works in us, and through us, ever say, "*In nothing am I behind the chiefest apostles, though I be nothing*" (2 Cor. 12:11). His humiliations had led him to true humility, with its wonderful gladness and glorying and pleasure in all that humbles.

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in my infirmities." The humble man has learned the secret of abiding 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. Then as he says, "*I be nothing*" (2 Cor. 12:11), the Word of his Lord brings ever deeper joy: "*My grace is sufficient for thee*" (v. 9).

I feel as if I must once again sum up all in these two lessons: the danger of pride is greater and nearer than we think, and so also the grace for humility.

The Danger of Pride

The danger of pride is greater and nearer than we think, especially at the time of our richest experiences. The preacher of spiritual truth with an admiring congregation hanging on his every word, the gifted speaker on a Holiness platform expounding the secrets of the heavenly life, the Christian giving testimony to a blessed experience, the evangelist moving on as in triumph, and made a blessing to rejoicing multitudes,—no man knows the hidden, the unconscious danger to which these are exposed. Paul was in danger without knowing it. What Jesus did for him is written for our admonition, that we may know our danger and know our only safety. Let it be said no more of a teacher or

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of one who professs holiness that he is so full of self; or, that he does not practice what he preaches; or, his blessing has not made him humbler or gentler. Jesus, in whom we trust, can make us humble.

The Grace for Humility

Yes, the grace for humility is greater and nearer, too, 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 gladly glory and take pleasure in weakness, in all that can humble us and keep us low; the power of Christ will rest upon us. Christ humbled Himself; therefore God exalted Him (Phil. 2:8-9). Christ will humble us and keep us humble. Let us heartily consent; let us trustfully and joyfully accept all that humbles. The power of Christ will rest upon us. We shall find that the deepest humility is the secret of the truest happiness, of a joy that nothing can destroy.

Chapter 12.

Humility and Exaltation

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. "

—Luke 14:1, 18:14

*"God giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourself I
n 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 am I to conquer this pride? The answer was simple. Two things are needed. Do what God says is your work: humble yourself. Trust Him to do what He says is His work: He will exalt you.

The command is clear: humble yourself. That does not mean that it is your work to conquer and cast out the pride of your nature, and to form within yourself the lowliness of the holy Jesus. No, this is God's work; the very essence of that exaltation in which He lifts you up into the real likeness of the beloved Son. What the command does mean is this: take every opportunity to humble yourself before God and man. Do this in the faith of the grace that is already working in you. Do it in the assurance of the more grace for victory that is coming, up to the light that conscience flashes each time upon the pride of the heart and its workings. Notwithstanding all there may be of failure and failing, stand persistently as under the unchanging command: humble yourself.

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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. Reckon humility to be indeed the highest virtue, your very first duty before God, the one perpetual safeguard of your soul. Set your heart upon it as the source of all blessing. The promise is divine and sure: He that humbles himself shall be exalted. See that you do the one thing God asks: humble yourself. God will see that He does the one thing He has promised. He will give more grace; 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- with the mingled experience of effort and inability, of failure and partial success, with the holy expectancy of something better that these awaken- train and discipline men for a higher stage. Then comes the time of fulfillment, when faith inherits the promise and enjoys what it had so often struggled for in vain. This law holds good in every part of the Christian life, and in the pursuit of every separate virtue. And that because 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 after obedience and attainment, he must learn to know his inability, in self-despair to die to himself, and so be fitted voluntarily and intelligently to receive from God the completion of that of which he had accepted at the beginning in ignorance. So, God who had been the Beginning, even before man rightly knew Him, or fully understood what His purpose was, is longed for and welcomed as the End, 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: humble yourself. The earnest attempt to listen and obey will be rewarded—yes, rewarded—with the painful discovery of two things. The one is the depth of pride, the unwillingness to count oneself and to be counted as nothing, to submit absolutely to God, who existed, that one never knew. The other is the utter powerlessness there is in all our efforts, and in all our prayers too for God's help, to destroy the hideous monster. Blessed is the man who now learns to put his hope in God, and to persevere, notwithstanding all the power of pride within him, in acts of humiliation before God and men.

We know the law of human nature: acts produce habits, habits breed dispositions, dispositions form the will, and the rightly-formed will is character. It is no different in the work of grace. As acts, persistently repeated, produce habits and dispositions, and these strengthened the will, He who works both to will and

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to do comes with His mighty power and Spirit. The humbling of the proud heart with which the penitent saint casts himself so often before God, is rewarded with the "more grace" of the humble heart. It is in this that the Spirit of Jesus has conquered, and brought the new nature to its maturity, and He the meek and lowly One now dwells for ever.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will exalt you. Of what does the exaltation consist? The highest glory of man is in being only a vessel, to receive and enjoy and show forth the glory of God. He can do this only as he is willing to be nothing in himself, that God may be all. Water always fills first the lowest places. The lower, the emptier a man lies before God, the speedier and the fuller will be the inflow of the 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 arbitrary, or by necessity connected 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, that fits us for receiving fully the indwelling of God.

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Jesus Himself is the proof of the truth of these words. He is the pledge of the certainty of their fulfillment in us. Let us take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, for He is *"meek and lowly of heart"* (Matt. 11:29). If we are willing to stoop to Him, as He has stooped to us, He will yet stoop to each one of us again, and we shall find ourselves equally yoked with Him. As we enter deeper into the fellowship of His humiliation, and either humble ourselves or bear the humbling of men, we can count upon it that the Spirit of His exaltation, "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 an humble spirit. When God can again have His rightful place in us, He will lift us up. Make His glory your care in humbling yourself; He will make your glory His care in perfecting your humility, and breathing into you, as your abiding life, the very Spirit of His son. As the all-pervading life of God possesses you, there will be nothing so natural, and nothing so sweet as to be nothing, with not a thought or wish for self, because all is occupied with Him who fills all. *"Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me"* (2 Cor. 12:9).

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Fellow saints, do we not have here the reason that our consecration 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 called in; it was, unconsciously, but still truly, in self and its holiness that the soul rejoiced. We never knew that humility—absolute, abiding, Christ-like humility and self-effacement, pervading and marking our whole life with God and man—was the most essential element of the life of the holiness we sought for.

It is only in the possession of God that I lose myself. In the height and breadth and glory of the sunshine, the littleness of the particle of dust playing in its beams is seen. So it is that humility is the taking our place in God's presence to be nothing but a dust particle 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. He speaks to us: "*I dwell in the high and holy place, and with him that is of contrite and humble spirit*" (Isa. 57:15). May this also be our destiny!

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

Final Words

Until the spirit of the heart is renewed, until it is emptied of all earthly desires and stands in a habitual hunger and thirst after God—which is the true spirit of prayer—all our prayer will be too much like lessons given to scholars. We will mostly say them only because we dare not neglect them. But do not be discouraged. Take the following advice, and then you may go to church without

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any danger of mere lip service or hypocrisy, even though there is a hymn or a prayer whose language is higher than that of your heart. Do this, go to the church as the tax collector went to the temple. Stand inwardly in the spirit of your mind in the form that he outwardly expressed when he cast down his eyes and could say, *“God be merciful to me a sinner”* (Luke 18:13). 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, make this an occasion of further sinking down in the spirit of the tax collector. You will then be helped and highly blessed by the prayers and praise that seem only to belong to a heart better than yours.

This, my friend, is a secret of secrets. It will help you to reap where you have not sown, and it will be a continual source of grace in your soul. For 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. For nothing is in vain, or without profit, to the humble soul. It stands always in a state of divine growth; everything that falls upon it is like a dew of heaven to it. Shut yourself up, 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 the oil out of which the love of God and man gets its flame. Always be enclosed in it—let it be as a garment with which you are always covered. Breathe nothing but in and from its spirit. See nothing but with its eyes. Hear nothing but with its ears. And 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 your growth in the life of God move forward.

Notes

- *Note A*

All this is to make it known that pride can degrade the highest angels into devils, and humility can raise fallen flesh and blood to the thrones of angels. Thus, this is the great end of God's raising a new creation out of a fallen kingdom of angels. For this reason, it stands in its state of war between the fire and pride of fallen angels, and the humility of the Lamb of God. It is here that the last trumpet may sound the great truth throughout 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. Do not look at pride as only an unbecoming temper, or at humility as only a decent virtue. The one is death, and the other is life; the one is all hell, the other is all heaven.

As much as you have of pride within you, so you have of the fallen angel alive in you. As much as you have of true humility, so 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 meet to tear the viper from you, though it may mean 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.

- *Note B*

"We need to know two things: first, that our salvation consists wholly in being saved from ourselves, or that which we are by nature; and second, that in the whole nature of things, nothing could be this salvation or savior to us but such a humility of God as is beyond all expression. Hence, the first unalterable condition given by the Savior to fallen man is this: Unless a man denies himself, he cannot be My disciple (Matt. 15:24). 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, the tree, of all the evil of our fallen state. All the evils of fallen angels and men

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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 bridges the impassable gulf between heaven and hell. What is then, or in what lies, the great struggle for eternal life? It lies entirely in the battle between pride and humility. Pride and humility are the two master powers—the two kingdoms at war for the eternal possession of man.

“There never was, and never will be, but one humility, and that is the one humility of Christ. Pride and self have the all of man, until man has his all from Christ. Therefore, he only fights the good fight that is fought so that the self-idolatrous nature he has from Adam may be brought to death by the supernatural humility of Christ brought life in him.”—William Law

- *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 means the perfection of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God? Must you not therefore say that a desire and faith in these virtues is an application to Christ, is 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 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 it wills and chooses to be dead to all self in a patient, humble resignation to the power and mercy of God.

“I seek all my salvation through the merits and mediation of the meek, humble, patient, suffering Lamb of God. He alone has the power to bring forth the blessed birth of these heavenly virtues in my soul. There is no possibility of salvation but in and by the birth of the meek, humble, patient, 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. Whenever we attain this, our souls will feast with

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such a peace and joy in God that the remembrance of everything that we called peace or joy before will be blotted out.

“This way to God is infallible. This infallibility is grounded in the twofold character of our Savior: first, as He is the Lamb of God, a principle of all meekness and humility in the soul; and second, as he is the Light of heaven, and blesses eternal nature, and turns it into a kingdom of heaven. When we are willing to get rest for our souls in meek, humble resignation to God, then he, as the light of God and heaven, joyfully breaks in upon us. He turns our darkness into light and begins the kingdom of God and of love within us that will never have an end.”—William Law

A Prayer for Humility

I will here give you an infallible touch-stone, that will tie all to 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:

"Lord, I pray that of Your great goodness You would make known to me, and take from my heart, every kind and form and degree of pride, whether it be from evil spirits, or my own corrupt nature; and that You would awaken in me the deepest depth and truth of that humility that can make me capable of Your light and Holy Spirit."

Reject every thought, except that of waiting and praying in this matter from the bottom of your heart, with such truth and earnestness used by people in torment who pray to 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 affirm 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.