

CHARITY
AND ITS FRUITS

OR,

CHRISTIAN LOVE AS MANIFESTED IN THE
HEART AND LIFE.

BY

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LECTURE VII.

THE SPIRIT OF CHARITY IS AN HUMBLE SPIRIT.

“Charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly.”—1 CORINTHIANS xiii. 4, 5.

HAVING shown the nature and tendency of charity or Christian love, in respect to our receiving injury, and doing good to others, that *it “suffers long and is kind;”* and also with respect to the good possessed by others as compared with that possessed by ourselves, *that charity “envieth not;”* the Apostle now proceeds to show, that in reference to what we ourselves may be or have, *charity is not proud;* that “it vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly.” As, on the one hand, it prevents us from envying others what they possess, so on the other, it keeps us from glorying in what we possess ourselves. Paul had just declared that charity was contrary to a spirit of envy, and now he declares that it is equally contrary to that spirit which specially provokes men to envy others, and which they often make a pretence or apology for envying them, viz. that they are puffed up with their honours and prosperity, and vaunt themselves on their possession of these things. When men have obtained prosperity or are advanced, and others observe that they are puffed up and vaunt themselves in it, this tends to provoke envy and make others uneasy at the sight of their prosperity. But if a man has prosperity or advancement and yet does not vaunt himself or behave in an unseemly manner on account of it, this tends to reconcile others to his high circumstances, and make them satisfied that he should enjoy his elevation. As already observed, when men envy another, they are prone to excuse and justify themselves in so doing, by the pretence that he does not make a good improvement of his prosperity, but is proud of it and puffed up on account of it. But the Apostle shows how Christian love, or charity, tends to make all behave suitably to their condition, whatever it may be; if below others, not to envy them, and if above others, not to be proud or puffed up with the prosperity.

In the words of the text, we may observe, that a spirit of Christian love is spoken of as the opposite of *a proud behaviour*, and that two degrees of such a behaviour are mentioned. The higher degree is expressed by a man’s “vaunting himself,” that is, by his so carrying himself as to show plainly that he glories in what he has, or is; and the lower degree is expressed by his “behaving himself unseemly,” that is, by his not conducting himself in a becoming and decent manner in the enjoyment of his prosperity, but so acting as to show that he thinks the mere fact of his being prosperous exalts him above others. And the spirit of charity or love is spoken of, as opposed not only to a proud behaviour, but to *a proud spirit*, or pride in the heart, for charity “is not puffed up.” The doctrine we are taught, then, in these words, is this:

THAT THE SPIRIT OF CHARITY, OR CHRISTIAN LOVE, IS AN HUMBLE SPIRIT. In speaking to this doctrine, I would show—I. What humility is and II. How a Christian spirit, or the spirit of charity, is an humble spirit. And,

I. *I would show what humility is.*—Humility may be defined to be a habit of mind and heart corresponding to our comparative unworthiness and vileness before God, or a sense of our own comparative meanness in his sight, with the disposition to a behaviour answerable thereto. It consists partly in the understanding, or in the thought and knowledge we have of ourselves; partly in the will; partly in the sense or estimate we have of ourselves; and partly in the disposition we have to a behaviour answerable to this sense or estimate. And the first thing in humility is,

1. *A sense of our own comparative meanness.* I say comparative meanness, because humility is a grace proper for beings that are glorious and excellent in very many respects. Thus the saints and angels in heaven excel in humility; and humility is proper and suitable in them, though they are pure, spotless, and glorious beings, perfect in holiness, and excelling in mind and strength. But though they are thus glorious, yet they have a comparative meanness before God, of which they are sensible; for he is said (Psalm cxiii. 6), “to humble himself to behold the things that are in heaven.” So the man Christ Jesus, who is the most excellent and glorious of all creatures, is yet meek and lowly of heart, and excels all other beings in humility. Humility is one of the excellences of Christ, because he is not only God but man, and as a man he was humble: for humility is not, and cannot be an attribute of the divine nature. God’s nature is indeed infinitely opposite to pride, and yet humility cannot properly be predicated of him; for if it could, this would argue imperfection, which is impossible in God. God who is infinite in excellence and glory, and infinitely above all things, cannot have any comparative meanness, and of course cannot have any such comparative meanness to be sensible of, and therefore cannot be humble. But humility is an excellence proper to all created intelligent beings, for they are all infinitely little and mean before God, and most of them are in some way mean and low in comparison with some of their fellow-creatures. Humility implies a compliance with that rule of the Apostle (Romans xii. 3), that we think not of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but that we think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every one of us the measure not only of faith, but of other things. And this humility, as a virtue in men, implies a sense of their own comparative meanness, both as compared with God, and as compared with their fellow-creatures. And,

First, Humility doth primarily and chiefly consist in *a sense of our meanness as compared with God*, or a sense of the infinite distance there is between God and ourselves. We are little, despicable creatures, even worms of the dust, and we should feel that we are as nothing and less than nothing in comparison with the majesty of heaven and earth. Such a sense of his nothingness Abraham expressed, when he said (Genesis xviii. 27), “Behold now, I have taken upon me

to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.” There is no true humility without somewhat of this spirit; for however sensible we may be of our meanness as compared with some of our fellow-creatures, we are not truly humble, unless we have a sense of our nothingness as compared with God. Some have a low thought of themselves as compared with other men, from the meanness of their circumstances, or from a melancholy and despondent temperament which is natural to them, or from some other cause, while still they know nothing of the infinite distance there is between them and God; and though they may be ready to look upon themselves as humble-spirited, yet they have no true humility. That which above all other things it concerns us to know of ourselves, is, what we are in comparison with God, who is our creator, and the one in whom we live, and move, and have our being, and who is infinitely perfect in all things. And if we are ignorant of our meanness as compared with him, then the most essential thing, and that which is indispensable in true humility, is wanting. But where this is truly felt, there arises from it,

Secondly, *A sense of our own meanness as compared with many of our fellow-creatures.* For man is not only a mean creature in comparison with God, but he is mean as compared with multitudes of creatures of a superior rank in the universe; and most men are mean in comparison with many of their fellowmen. And when a sense of this comparative meanness arises from a just sense of our meanness as God sees it, then it is of the nature of true humility. He that has a right sense and estimate of himself in comparison with God, will be likely to have his eyes open to see himself aright in all respects. Seeing truly how he stands with respect to the first and highest of all beings, will tend greatly to help him to a just apprehension of the place he stands in among creatures. And he that does not rightly know the first and greatest of beings, who is the fountain and source of all other beings, cannot truly know anything aright; but so far as he has come to a knowledge of the former, so far is he prepared for and led unto the knowledge of other things, and so of himself as related to others, and as standing among them.

All this would apply to men considered as unfallen beings, and would have been true of our race if our first parents had not fallen, and thus involved their posterity in sin. But humility in *fallen* men, implies a sense of a ten-fold meanness, both before God and men.. *Man’s natural* meanness consists in his being infinitely below God in natural perfection, and in God’s being infinitely above him in greatness, power, wisdom, majesty, &c. And a truly humble man is sensible of *the small extent of his own knowledge*, and the great extent of his ignorance, and of the small extent of his understanding as compared with the understanding of God. He is sensible of his weakness; how little his strength is, and how little he is able to do. He is sensible of his natural distance from God; of his dependence on him; of the insufficiency of his own power and wisdom, and that it is by God’s power that he is upheld and provided for, and that he needs God’s wisdom to lead and guide him, and his might to enable him to do what he ought to do for him. He is sensible of his subjection to God, and that

God's greatness does properly consist in his authority, whereby he is the sovereign Lord and king over all; and he is willing to be subject to that authority, as feeling that it becomes him to submit to the divine will, and yield in all things to God's authority. Man had this sort of comparative littleness before the fall. He was then infinitely little and mean in comparison with God; but his natural meanness is become much greater since the fall, for the moral ruin of his nature has greatly impaired his natural faculties, though it has not extinguished them.

The truly humble man, since the fall, is also sensible of his *moral* meanness and vileness. This consists in his sinfulness. His *natural* meanness, is his *littleness as a creature*; his *moral* meanness is his *vileness and filthiness as a Sinner*. Unfallen man was infinitely distant from God in his natural qualities or attributes: fallen man is infinitely distant from him, also, as sinful and thus filthy, And a truly humble person is in some measure sensible of his comparative meanness in this respect, that he sees how exceedingly polluted he is before an infinitely holy God, in whose sight the heavens are not clean. He sees how pure God is, and how filthy and abominable he is before him. Such a sense of his comparative meanness Isaiah had, when he saw God's glory, and cried out (Isaiah vi. 5): "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of Hosts!" An humble sense of our meanness in this respect, implies self-abhorrence, such as led Job to exclaim (Job xlii. 5, 6): "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." It implies, also, such contrition and brokenness of heart, as David speaks of when he says (Psalm li. 17), "The sacrifices of God, are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise;" and such, too, as Isaiah contemplated when he declared (Isaiah lvii. 15), "Thus saith the high and lofty One that in? habiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him, also, that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." And both the sense of our own littleness, and the sense of our moral vileness before God, are implied in that poverty of spirit, which the Saviour speaks of when he says (Matthew v. 3), "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

And in order to this sense of our own meanness and unworthiness that is implied in humility, it is not only necessary that we should know God, and have a sense of his greatness, without which we cannot know ourselves, but we must have a right sense, also, of his excellence and loveliness. The devils and damned spirits see a great deal of God's greatness, of his wisdom, omnipotence, &c. God makes them sensible of it by what they see in his dealings, and feel in their own sufferings. However unwilling they are to know it, God makes them know how much he is above them now, and they shall know and feel it still more, at and after the judgment But they have no humility, nor will they ever have, because though they see and feel God's greatness, yet they see

and feel nothing of his loveliness. And without this there can be no true humility, for that cannot exist unless the creature feels his distance from God, not only with respect to his greatness, but also his loveliness. The angels and ransomed spirits in heaven see both these things; not only how much greater God is than they are, but how much more lovely he is also; so that though they have no absolute defilement and filthiness as fallen men have, yet as compared with God, it is said (Job xv. 15, and iv. 18), “The heavens are not clean in his sight,” and “his angels he charged with folly.” From such a sense of their comparative meanness, persons are made sensible how unworthy they are of God’s mercy, or gracious notice. Such a sense Jacob expressed, when he said (Genesis xxxii. 10), “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant;” and David, when he exclaimed (2 Samuel vii. 18), “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?” And such a sense have all who are truly humble before God. But as humility consists in a sense of our comparative meanness, so it implies,

2. *A disposition to a corresponding behaviour and conduct.*—Without this there is no true humility. If it could be so that our understanding could be enlightened, to see our own meanness, and at the same time the will and disposition of the soul did not comply with, and conform to that which is answerable to our sense of it, but opposed it, then there would be no humility. As was just now said, the devils and damned spirits see much of their comparative littleness before God in some respects. They know that God is infinitely above them in power, and knowledge, and majesty. And yet not knowing and feel his loveliness and excellence, their wills and dispositions by no means comply with, and conform to what is becoming their meanness; and so they have no humility, but are full of pride. Without pretending to mention everything in our behaviour answerable to a proper sense of our meanness and vileness to which humility would dispose us, for that would include the whole of our duty toward God and man, I would specify some things that are worthy of notice, both in reference to God, and in reference to man. And,

First, Some things in our behaviour toward God, to which humility will dispose us. As the first of these, humility disposes a person heartily and freely to acknowledge his meanness or littleness before God. He sees how fit and suitable it is that he should do this; and he does it willingly, and even with delight. He freely confesses his own nothingness and vileness, and owns himself unworthy of any mercy, and deserving of all misery. It is the disposition of the humble soul, to lie low before God, and to humble himself in the dust in his presence. Humility, also, disposes one to be distrustful of himself, and to depend only on God. The proud man, that has a high opinion of his own wisdom, or strength, or righteousness, is self-confident. But the humble are not disposed to trust in themselves, but are diffident of their own sufficiency; and it is their disposition to rely on God, and with delight to cast themselves wholly on him as their refuge, and righteousness, and strength. The humble man is fur-

ther disposed *to renounce all the glory of the good he has or does, and to give it all to God*. If there be anything that is good in him, or any good clone by him, it is not his disposition to glory or vaunt himself in it before God, but to ascribe all to God, and in the language of the Psalmist (Psalm cxv. 1) to say, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and thy truth’s sake.” It is the disposition, again, of the humble *person, wholly to subject himself to God*. His heart is not opposed to a full and absolute subjection to the. divine will, but inclined to it. He is disposed to be subject to the commands and laws of God, for he sees it to be right and best that he who is so infinitely inferior to God, should be thus subject; and that it is an honour that belongs to God, to reign over, and give laws to him. And he is equally disposed to be subject to the providence, and daily disposal of God, and to submit cheerfully to his will as manifested in what he orders for him; and though God orders affliction, and low and depressed circumstances as his lot in the world, he does not murmur, but feeling his meanness and unworthiness, he is sensible that afflictive and trying dispensations are what he deserves, and that his circumstances are better than he merits. And however dark the divine dealings, with the faith which we so often see manifested in those who are eminent in grace, he is ready to say with Job (Job xiii. 15), “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” And as *humility* implies a disposition to such a behaviour toward God, so,

Secondly, It disposes *to a behaviour toward men* answerable to our comparative meanness. And this I shall show by pointing out what kind of behaviour humility tends to prevent. And it tends in the first place, to prevent *an aspiring and ambitious behaviour* amongst men. The man that is under the influence of an humble spirit, is content with such a situation amongst men as God is pleased to allot to him, and is not greedy of honour, and does not affect to appear uppermost and exalted above his neighbours. He acts on the principle of that saying of the prophet (Jeremiah xlv. 5), “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not;” and also of that injunction of the Apostle (Romans xii. 16), “Mind not high things.” Humility *also to prevent an ostentatious behaviour*. If the truly humble man has any advantage or benefit of any kind, either temporal or spiritual, above his neighbours, he will not affect to make a show of it. If he has greater natural abilities than others, he will not be forward to parade and display them, or be careful that others shall know his superiority in this respect. If he has a remarkable spiritual experience, he will not be solicitous that men should know it for the sake of the honour he may obtain by it; nor does he affect to be esteemed of men as an eminent saint and a faithful servant of heaven; for it is a small thing with him what men may think of him. If he does anything well, or does his duty in any respect with difficulty and self-denial, he does not affect that men should take notice of it, nor is he careful lest they should not observe it. He is not of the behaviour of the Pharisees, who, it is said (Matthew xxiii. 5), did “all their works to be seen of men;” but if he has done anything in sincerity, he is content that the great Being who

sees in secret beholds and will approve it.

Humility tends, also, to prevent *an arrogant and assuming behaviour*. He that is under the influence of an humble spirit, is not forward to take too much upon him; and when he is amongst others, he does not carry it toward them as if he expected and insisted that a great deal of regard should be shown to himself. His behaviour does not carry with it the idea that he is the best amongst those about him, and that he is the one to whom the chief regard should be shown, and whose judgment is most to be sought and followed. He does not carry it as if he expected that everybody should bow and truckle to him, and give place to him as if no one was of as much consequence as himself. He does not put on assuming airs in his common conversation, nor in the management of his business, nor in the duties of religion. He is not *forward to take* upon himself that which does not belong to him, as though he had power where indeed he has not, as if the earth ought to be subject to his bidding, and must comply with his inclination and purposes. On the contrary, he gives all due deference to the judgment and inclinations of others, and his behaviour carries with it the impression, that he sincerely receives and acts on that teaching of the Apostle (Philippians ii. 3), "Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves." In talking of the things of religion, he has not the air, either in his speech or behaviour, of one that esteems himself one of the best saints in the whole company, but he rather carries himself as if he thought, in the expression of the Apostle (Ephesians iii. 8), that he was "less than the least of all saints."

Humility tends, also, *to prevent a scornful behaviour*. Treating others with scorn and contempt, is one of the worst and most offensive manifestations of pride toward them. But they that are under the influence of an humble spirit, are far from such a behaviour. They do not despise, or look down on those that are below them, with a haughty supercilious air, as though they were scarce worthy to come nigh them, or to have any regard from them. They are sensible that there is no such vast difference between themselves and their fellow-men as warrants such a behaviour. They are not found treating with scorn and contempt what others say, or speaking of what they do with ridicule and sneering reflections, or sitting and relating what others may have spoken or done only, to make sport of it. On the contrary, humility disposes a person to condescending behaviour to the meekest and lowest, and to treat inferiors with courtesy and affability, as being sensible of his own weakness and despicableness before God, and that it is God alone that makes him in any respect to differ from others, or gives him the advantage over them. The truly humble will (Romans xii. 16) always have the spirit to "condescend to men of low estate." Even if they are great men, and in places of public trust and honour, humility will dispose them to treat their inferiors in such a manner as has been spoken of, and not in a haughty and scornful manner, as vaunting themselves on their greatness.

Humility tends, also, *to prevent a wilful and stubborn behaviour*. They that are under the influence of an humble spirit, will not set up their own will either in public or private affairs. They will not be stiff and inflexible, and insist that everything must go according to what they happen first to propose, and manifest a disposition by no means to be easy, but to make all the difficulty they can, and to make others uneasy as well as themselves, and to prevent anything being done with any quietness, if it be not according to their own mind and will. They are not as some that the Apostle Peter describes (2 Peter ii. 10), “presumptuous and self-willed,” always bent on carrying their own points, and if this cannot be done, then bent on opposing and annoying others. On the contrary, humility disposes men to be of a yielding spirit to others, ready, for the sake of peace, and to gratify others, to comply in many things with their inclinations, and to yield to their judgments wherein they are not inconsistent with truth and holiness. A truly humble man, is inflexible in nothing but in the cause of his Lord and master, which is the cause of truth and virtue. In this he is inflexible because God and conscience require it; but in things of lesser moment, and which do not involve his principles as a follower of Christ, and in things that only concern his own private interests, he is apt to yield to others. And if he sees that others are stubborn and unreasonable in their wilfulness, he does not allow that to provoke him to be stubborn and wilful in his opposition to them; but he rather acts on the principles taught in such passages as Romans xii. 19; 1 Corinthians vi. 7 and Matthew v. 40, 41: “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath;” “Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” “If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.”

Humility will further tend *to prevent a levelling behaviour*. Some persons are always ready to level those above them down to themselves, while they are never willing to level those below them up to their own position, But he that is under the influence of humility will avoid both these extremes. On the one hand, he will be willing that all should rise just so far as their diligence and worth of character entitle them to; and on the other hand, he will be willing that his superiors should be known and acknowledged in their place, and have rendered to them all the honours that are their due. He will not desire that all should stand upon the same level, for he knows it is best that there should be gradations in society; that some should be above others, and should be honoured and submitted to as such. And therefore he is willing to be content with this divine arrangement, and agreeably to it, to conform both his spirit and behaviour to such precepts as the following “Render therefore to all their dues; tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour” (Romans xiii. 7); “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work” (Titus iii. 1).

Humility also tends, once more, *to prevent a self-justifying behaviour* He

that is under the influence of an humble spirit, if he has fallen into a fault, as all are liable at some time to fall, or if in anything he has injured another, or dishonoured the Christian name and character, will be willing to acknowledge his fault, and take the shame of it to himself. He will not be hard to be brought to a sense of his fault, nor to testify that sense by a suitable acknowledgment of his error. He will be inwardly humbled for it, and ready to show his humility in the manner which the Apostle points out, when he says (James v. 16), "Confess your faults one to another." It is pride that makes men so exceedingly backward to confess their fault when they have fallen into one, and that makes them think that to bring them shame, which is in truth their highest honour. But humility in the behaviour, makes men prompt to their duty in this respect, and if it prevails as it should, will lead them to do it with alacrity and even delight. And when any one shall give such a person a Christian admonition or reproof for any fault, humility will dispose him to take it kindly, and even thankfully. It is pride, that makes men to be so uneasy when they are reproved by any of their neighbours, so that oftentimes they will not bear it, but become angry, and manifest great bitterness of spirit. Humility, on the contrary, will dispose them not only to tolerate such reproofs, but to esteem and prize them as marks of kindness and friendship, "Let the righteous smite me;" says the Psalmist (Psalm cxli. 5), "it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head." Having thus shown what humility is in its nature, and to what it will lead us both in spirit and behaviour, in respect both to God and to our fellow-men, I proceed, as proposed, to show,

II. *That the spirit of charity is an humble Spirit.* And this I would do in two particulars: first, by showing how the spirit of charity or divine love, implies and tends to humility, and then by showing how such exercises of this charity as the gospel tends to draw forth, do especially imply and tend to it. And,

A spirit of charity or divine love implies and tends to humility.

First, It implies humility. The spirit of charity or divine love, as has already been shown, is the sum of the Christian spirit, and of course implies humility in it, as an essential qualification. True divine love, is an humble love; and that love which is not humble, is not truly divine. And this appears plain from two considerations:

Because a sense of the loveliness of God is peculiarly that discovery of God that works humility, and because when God is truly loved, he is loved as an infinite superior.

In the first place, Because a sense of the loveliness of God, is peculiarly that discovery of God that works humility. A sense or discovery of God's greatness, without the sight of his loveliness, will not do it, but it is the discovery of his loveliness that effects it, and that makes the soul truly humble. All grace is wrought in the heart through the knowledge of God, or by the clear discovery of his perfections; and the knowledge of these perfections is the foundation of all grace. And it is the discovery or sense of God as lovely, and not only as

lovely, but as infinitely above us in loveliness, that works humility in the heart. Merely having a sense of the fact that God is infinitely above us, and that there is an infinite distance between him and us in greatness, will not work humility. It will effect nothing toward making the heart humble, unless we are also sensible that there is an infinite distance between him and us in his loveliness. And this is evident from the work of the law on the heart of the sinner, and from the experience of devils and damned spirits. Under the work of the law on the heart, persons may have a sense of the awful greatness of God, and yet have no humility because they have no sense of his loveliness. All the work of the spirit, and of the law and gospel in the heart, is wrought by conviction; and there is a kind of conviction that natural men have as to God, that awakens them, and makes them feel their danger; and this is a conviction of the terrible greatness of God, revealing himself in the requirements and denunciations of his law. But this they may and often do have, and yet have no humility; and the reason is, that they have no sense of how much God is above them in loveliness. This is the only thing wanting; and, without this, they will not be humble.

And the same is manifest from the experience of devils and damned spirits. They have a clear sense of God's being infinitely above them in greatness, but they have no humility, because they do not feel how much he is above them in loveliness. As was observed, God makes the devils and lost spirits know and feel that he is above them in greatness and power, and that they are as nothing in his hands; and yet they are proud, and have no humility. And at and after the day of judgment, they will see still more of his greatness. *When Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven*, surrounded by his angels, and with the glory of his Father, then shall the wicked, even the kings, and great rulers, and the rich captains, and *the mighty men of the world*, see that he is infinitely above them in greatness; and as they see his terrible majesty, they shall hide themselves from his face. And the devils, too, will see it, and will tremble at that time, a great deal more than they tremble now at the thoughts of it. And the devils and wicked men shall be made to know that he is the Lord. They shall know it with a witness. They shall know by what they see, and by what they feel when the sentence comes to be executed on them, that God is indeed above them, and they are as nothing before him, as is said by the prophet (Ezekiel vii. 27): "According to their deserts will I judge them, and they shall know that I am the Lord." But though they shall so clearly, and so terribly see that God is infinitely above them in greatness, yet they will have no humility. They will see themselves at an infinite distance from God, but their hearts will not comply with that distance and feel as is answerable to it. Because they will not see God's loveliness, they will not know their infinite distance from him in this respect, and therefore will not be led to humility. And this their experience shows, that it is a sense of the infinite distance of the creature from the Creator in loveliness, that causes true humility. This it is that causes humility in the angels in heaven, and in the saints on earth. And since it is a sense of God's

loveliness that works humility, we may hence learn that divine love implies humility, for love is but the disposition of the heart toward God as lovely. If the knowledge of God as lovely, causes humility, then a respect to God as lovely, implies humility. And from this love to God, arises a Christian love to man; and therefore it follows, that both love to God, and love to man, the union of which is the very thing the Apostle calls charity, alike imply humility.

And it further appears that divine love implies humility, because when God is truly loved, he is loved as an infinite superior. True love to God, is not love to him as an equal; for every one that truly loves God, honours him as God, that is, as a being infinitely superior to all others in greatness and excellence. It is love to a being who is infinitely perfect in all his attributes, the supreme Lord, and absolute sovereign of the universe. But if we love God as infinitely superior to ourselves, then love is exercised in us as infinite inferiors, and therefore it is an humble love. In exercising it, we look upon ourselves as infinitely mean and low before God, and love proceeds from us as such. But to love God in this manner, is to love him in humility, and with an humble love. Thus divine love implies humility. But,

Secondly, It also tends to humility. Humility is not only a quality in divine love, but it is also an effect of it. Divine love does not only imply humility in its nature, but also tends to cherish and produce it, and to call forth its exercises as consequences and fruits of love. And humility is not only implied in, and is as it were a part of love, but it is a fruit and uniform production of love. And that, especially, in two ways. In the first place, love inclines the heart to *that spirit and behaviour that is becoming the distance from the beloved*. It is enmity against God that makes men's hearts so opposed to love to him, and to such a behaviour as carries in it a full and proper acknowledgment of the distance between themselves and him. Those that men have a great love to, they are willing to honour, and willing to acknowledge their superiority to themselves, and that they themselves are far below them; and they are willing to give them the honour of such an acknowledgment, especially if they are very much their superiors. The devils know their distance from God, but they are not reconciled to it; and the chief of devils affected to be equal with God, and even above him, because he had no love to him. And so in a measure it is with men, while they are without divine love. But when love enters the heart, then the inclination of the soul is to all that humble respect that becomes the distance between God and us. And so love to man, arising from love to God, disposes to a humble behaviour toward them, inclining us to give them all the honour and respect that are their due. And so in the next place, love to God tends to *an abhorrence of in against God*, and so to our being humbled before him for it. So much as anything is loved, so much will its contrary be hated. And therefore just in proportion as we love God, in the same proportion shall we have an abhorrence of sin against him. And having an abhorrence of sin against God, this will lead us to abhor ourselves for it, and so to humble ourselves for it before God. Having thus shown how divine love, which is the

sum of the Christian temper, implies and tends to humility, I come now to show,

2. *How the gospel tends to draw forth such exercises of love as do especially imply and tend to it.* A Christian spirit and a gospel spirit are the same. That is a Christian spirit, which the Christian revelation tends to lead to; but the Christian revelation is the same as the gospel. Now such a kind of exercises of love as the gospel tends to draw forth, do, in a special manner, tend to, and imply humility; and that on several accounts. And,

First, Because the gospel leads us *to love God as an infinitely condescending God.* The gospel above all things in the world, holds forth the exceeding condescension of God. No other manifestation that ever God made of himself, exhibits such wonderful condescension. as the Christian revelation does. The gospel teaches how God, who humbles himself to behold things that are in heaven and earth, stooped so low as to take an infinitely gracious notice of poor vile worms of the dust, and to concern himself for their salvation, and so as to send his only-begotten Son to die for them, that they might be forgiven, and elevated, and honoured, and brought into eternal fellowship with him, and to the perfect enjoyment of himself in heaven forever. So that the love the Christian revelation leads us to, is love to God as such a condescending God, and to such exercises of love as it becomes us to have toward a God of such infinite condescension; and such acts of love are, of necessity, humble acts of love, for there is no disposition in the creature, that is more adapted to condescension in the creator, than humility is. The condescension of God, is not properly humility, because, for the reasons already given, humility is a virtue only of those beings that have comparative meanness. And yet God, by his infinite condescension, shows his nature to be infinitely far from, and hostile to pride, and therefore his condescension is sometimes spoken of as humility; and humility on our part is the most proper conformity to God's condescension that there can be in a creature. His condescension tends to draw forth humility on our part.

Secondly, The gospel leads us *to love Christ as an humble person.* Christ is the God-man, including both the divine and the human nature; and so has not only condescension which is a divine perfection, but also humility which is a creature excellency. Now the gospel holds forth Christ to us as one that is meek and lowly of heart; as the most perfect and excellent instance of humility that ever existed; as one in whom the greatest performances and expressions of humility were manifest in his abasement of himself. Though he was "in the form of God," he "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians ii. 6, 7, 8). Now the gospel leads us to love Christ as such an humble person; and therefore to love him with such a love as is proper to be exercised toward such an one, is to exercise an humble love. And this is the more true, because the gospel leads us to love Christ not only as an humble person, but as an humble Saviour and Lord, and head. If our

Lord and master is humble, and we love him as such, certainly it becomes us who are his disciples, and servants, to be so too; for surely it does not become the servant to be prouder, or less abased than his master. As Christ himself tells us (Matthew x. 24, 25), “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord.” And again, he tells us (John. xiii. 13-16), that his own example of humility was intended for our imitation; and still again declares to his disciples (Matthew xx. 25-28), “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you. But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 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, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Thirdly, The gospel leads us *to love Christ as a crucified Saviour*. As our Saviour and Lord, he snared the greatest ignominy, and was put to the most ignominious death, though he was the Lord of glory. This may well kindle the humility of his followers, and lead them to an humble love to him. For by God sending his Son into the world to suffer such an ignominious death, he did, as it were, pour contempt on all the earthly glory that men are wont to be proud of, in that he gave him, as the Saviour and head of all his elect people, to *appear in circumstances so far from earthly glory*, and in circumstances of the greatest earthly ignominy and shame. And Christ, by being willing thus to be abased, and thus to suffer, not only cast contempt on all worldly glory and greatness, but he showed his humility in the clearest manner. if we, then, consider ourselves as the followers of the meek, and lowly, and crucified Jesus, we shall walk humbly before God and man., all the days of our life on earth.

Fourthly, The gospel still further tends to lead us to humble exercises of love, because it leads *us to love Christ as one that was crucified for our sakes*. The mere fact that Christ was crucified, is a great argument for the humility of us who are his followers. But his being crucified *for our sakes*, is a much greater argument for it. For Christ’s being crucified for our sakes, is the greatest testimony of God against our sins that ever was given. It shows more of God’s abhorrence of our sins, than any other act or event that God has ever directed or permitted. The measure of God’s abhorrence of our sins, is shown by his having them so terribly punished, and his wrath so executed against them, even when imputed to his own Son. So that this is the greatest inducement to our humility that can be presented, and this on two accounts; because it is the greatest manifestation of the vileness of that for which we should be humble, and also the greatest argument for our loving the humble spirit, which the gospel holds forth. The excellency of Christ, and the love of Christ, more appear in his yielding himself to be crucified for us, than in any other of his acts, so that these things, considered together, above all things tend to draw forth on our part, the exercises of humble love. In the application of this subject we may see,

1. *The excellency of a Christian spirit.* “The righteous,” it is said (Proverbs xii. 26), “is more excellent than his neighbour.” And much of this excellence in the true Christian, consists in his meek and lowly spirit which makes him so like his Saviour. This spirit the Apostle speaks of (1 Peter iii. 4) as the richest of all ornaments, “even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” The subject should lead us,

2. *To examine ourselves, and see if we are indeed of an humble spirit.*—“*His soul,*” says the prophet (Habakkuk ii. 4), “which is lifted up, is not upright in him;” and the fact that “God resisteth the proud” (James iv. 6), or, as in the original, “sets himself in battle array against him,” shows how he abhors a proud spirit. And it is not every show and appearance of humility that will stand the test of the gospel. There are various imitations of it that fall short of the reality. Some put on an affected humility; others have a natural low spirit-edness, and are wanting in manliness of character; others are melancholy or despondent; others under the convictions of conscience by which, for the time, they are depressed, seem broken in spirit; others seem greatly abased while in adversity and affliction, or have a natural melting of the heart under the common illuminations of the truth; to others there is a counterfeit kind of humility, wrought by the delusions of Satan: and all of these may be mistaken for true humility. Examine yourself, then, and see what is the nature of your humility, whether it be of these superficial kinds, or whether it be indeed wrought by the Holy Spirit in your hearts; and do not rest satisfied, till you find that the spirit and behaviour of those whom the gospel accounts humble, are yours.

3. *The subject exhorts those who are strangers to the grace of God, to seek that grace, that they may thus attain to this spirit of humility.* If such be your character, you are now destitute of a Christian spirit, which is a spirit of grace; and so, wholly destitute of humility. Your spirit is a proud spirit; and though you may not seem to carry yourself very proudly amongst men, yet you are lifting yourself up against God, in refusing to submit your heart and life to him. And in doing this, you are disregarding or defying God’s sovereignty, and daring to contend with your maker, though he dreadfully threatens those who do this. You are proudly casting contempt on God’s authority, in refusing to obey it, and continuing to live in disobedience; in refusing to be conformed to his will, and to comply with the humbling conditions and way of salvation by Christ, and in trusting to your own strength and righteousness, instead of that which Christ so freely offers. Now as to such a spirit, consider that this is, in an especial sense, the sin of devils. “Not a novice,” says the Apostle (1 Timothy iii. 6), “lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into condemnation of the devil.” And consider, too, how odious and abominable such a spirit is to God, and how terribly he has threatened it; declaring (Proverbs xvi. 5) that “every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though hand join in hand, he shall not go unpunished;” and again (Proverbs vi. 16) “These things doth the Lord hate, a proud look, &c.,” and again (Proverbs xxix. 23), that “a man’s pride shall bring him low,” and (2 Samuel xxii. 28) that the eyes of the

Lord are upon the haughty that he may bring them down; and still again (Isai-ah xxiii. 9), that “the Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.” Consider, too, how Pharaoh and Korah, and Haman, and Belshazzar, and Herod, were awfully punished for their pride of heart and conduct; and be admonished, by their example, to cherish an humble spirit, and to walk humbly with God, and toward men. Finally,

4. *let all be exhorted earnestly to seek much of an humble spirit, and to endeavour to be humble in all their behaviour toward God and men.* Seek for a deep and abiding sense of your comparative meanness before God and man. Know God. Confess your nothingness and ill-desert before him. Distrust yourself. Rely only on God. Renounce all glory except from him. Yield yourself heartily to his will and service. Avoid an aspiring, ambitious, ostentatious, assuming, arrogant, scornful, stubborn, wilful, levelling, self-justifying behaviour; and strive for more and more of the humble spirit that Christ manifested while he was on earth. Consider the many motives to such a spirit. Humility is a most essential and distinguishing trait in all true piety. It is the attendant of every grace, and in a peculiar manner tends to the purity of Christian feeling. It is the ornament of the spirit; the source of some of the sweetest exercises of Christian experience; the most acceptable sacrifice we can offer to God; the subject of the richest of his promises; the spirit with which he will dwell on earth, and which he will crown with glory in heaven hereafter. Earnestly seek then, and diligently, and prayerfully cherish an humble spirit, and God shall walk with you here below, and when a few more days shall have passed, he will receive you to the honours bestowed on his people at Christ’s right hand.