

would be like a large sail to a little boat, which would quickly pull thee under water: thou hast that which is most suitable to thee of all conditions.

(2.) *Eye the seasonableness of thy mercies, how they are timed to an hour.* Providence brings forth all its fruits in due season.

(3.) *Eye the peculiar nature of thy mercies.* Others have common, thou special ones; others have but a single, thou a double sweetness in thy enjoyments, one natural from the matter of it, another spiritual from the way in which, and end for which, it comes.

(4.) *Observe the order in which providence sends your mercies.* See how one is linked strangely to another, and is a door to let in many. Sometimes one mercy is introductive to a thousand.

(5.) And lastly, *Observe the constancy of them,* "they are new every morning," Lam. iii. 23. How assiduously doth God visit thy soul and body! Think with thyself, if there be but a suspension of the care of Christ for one hour, that hour would be thy ruin. Thousands of evils stand round about thee, watching when Christ will but remove his eye from thee, that they may rush in and devour thee.

Could we thus study the providence of Christ in all the good and evil that befalls us in the world, then in every state we should be content, Phil. iv. 11. Then we should never be stopt, but furthered in our way by all that falls out; then would our experience swell to great volumes, which we might carry to heaven with us; and then should we answer all Christ's ends in every state he brings us into. Do this, and say,

*Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.*

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## SERMON XVIII.

Of the Necessity of Christ's Humiliation, in order to the Execution of all these his blessed Offices for us; and particularly of his Humiliation by Incarnation.

PHIL. ii. 8.

*And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.*

**Y**OU have heard how Christ was invested with the offices of prophet, priest, and king, for the carrying on the blessed design of our redemption; the execution of these offices necessarily required that he should be both deeply *abased*, and highly *exalted*. He cannot, as our *Priest*, offer up himself a sacrifice to God for us,

except he be humbled, and humbled to death. He cannot, as a *King*, powerfully apply the virtue of that his sacrifice, except he be exalted, yea, highly exalted. Had he not stooped to the low estate of a man, he had not, as a *Priest*, had a sacrifice of his own to offer; as a *Prophet*, he had not been fit to teach us the will of God, so as that we should be able to bear it; as a *King*, he had not been a suitable head to the church: and, had he not been highly exalted, that sacrifice had not been carried within the vail before the Lord. Those discoveries of God could not have been *universal, effectual* and *abiding*. The government of Christ could not have secured, protected, and defended the subjects of his kingdom.

The infinite wisdom prospecting all this, ordered that Christ should first be deeply humbled, then highly exalted: both which states of Christ are presented to us by the apostle in this context.

He that intends to build high, lays the foundation deep and low. Christ must have a distinct glory in heaven, transcending that of angels and men, (for the saints will know him from all others by his glory, as the sun is known from the lesser stars.) And, as he must be exalted infinitely above them, so he must first, in order thereunto, be humbled and abased as much below them: "His form was marred more than any man's; and his visage more than the sons of men." The ground colours are a deep sable, which afterwards are laid on with all the splendour and glory of heaven.

Method requires that we first speak to this state of *Humiliation*.

And, to that purpose, I have read this scripture to you, which presents you the Son under an (almost) total eclipse. He that was beautiful and glorious, Isa. iv. 2. yea, glorious as the only begotten of the Father, John i. 14. yea, \* *the glory*, James ii. 1. yea, the splendour and "brightness of the Father's glory," Heb. i. 3. was so veiled, clouded, and debased, that he looked not like himself; a God, no, nor scarce as a man; for, with reference to this humbled state, it is said, Psal. xxii. 6. "I am a worm, and no man:" *q. d.* rather write me *worm*, than *man*: I am become an *abject* among men †, as that word, Isa. liii. 3. signifies. This humiliation of Christ we have here expressed in the *nature, degrees*, and *duration* or continuance of it.

1. The nature of it, *εταπεινωσεν εαυτον*, he humbled himself.

\* The Hebrew words *וְיָבִי וְלִכְבוֹד* in Isa. iv. 2. literally, signify, *for beauty and for glory*. The words *Ιησὺς Χριστὸς τῆς δόξης*, in James ii. 1. signify, *Jesus Christ, the glory*; and *απαύγασμα τῆς δόξης*, *the brightness of glory*.

† The scorn of men, an abject among men.

1. The word imports both a *real* and *voluntary* abasement\*. *Real*; he did not personate a humbled man, nor act the part of one, in a debased state, but was really, and indeed humbled; and that not only before men, but God. As man, he was humbled really, as God in respect of his manifestative glory: and, as it was real, so also *voluntary*: † It is not said he was humbled, but *he humbled himself*: he was willing to stoop to this low and abject state for us. And, indeed, the voluntariness of his humiliation made it most acceptable to God, and singularly commends the love of Christ to us, that he would chuse to stoop to all this ignominy, suffering, and abasement for us.

2. The degrees of his humiliation; it was not only so low as to become a man, a man under law; but he humbled himself to become "obedient to death, even the death of the cross." Here you see the depth of Christ's humiliation, both *specified*, it was unto *death*, and *aggravated*, even the death of the cross: not only to become a man but a dead corpse, and that too hanging on a tree, dying the death of a malefactor.

3. The duration, or continuance of this his humiliation: it continued from the first moment of his *incarnation*, to the very moment of his *vivification* and quickening in the grave. So the terms of it are fixed here by the apostle; from the time he was found in fashion as a man, that is, from his incarnation, unto his death on the cross, which also comprehends the time of his abode in the grave; so long his humiliation lasted. Hence the observation is,

Doct. *That the state of Christ, from his conception to his resurrection, was a state of deep abasement and humiliation.*

We are now entering upon Christ's humbled state, which I shall cast under three general heads, viz. his humiliation, in his *incarnation*, in his *life*, and in his *death*. My present work is to open Christ's humiliation, in his incarnation, imported in these words, *He was found in fashion as a man*. By which you are not to conceive that he only assumed a body, as an assisting form, to appear transiently to us in it, and so lay it down again. ‡ It is not such an apparition of Christ in the shape of a man, that is here intend-

\* But he speaks not of a feigned and counterfeit, but of a true and real humiliation. *Zanch. in loc.*

† He was not humbled by another, like the fallen angels who were by God thrown headlong into the infernal pit. *Ibid.*

‡ In these few words he confirms the things he had said before of the true nature of man (which he calls *the form of a servant*) assumed by the Son of God into unity of person, by which he was made like to men in all things, sin excepted. *Zanch.*

ed; but his true and real assumption of our nature, which was a special part of his humiliation; as will appear by the following particulars.

1. The *incarnation* of Christ was a most wonderful humiliation of him, inasmuch as thereby he is brought into the rank and order of creatures, who is over all, "God blessed for ever," Rom. ix. 5. This is the astonishing mystery, 1 Tim. iii. 16. that God should be manifest in the flesh; that the eternal God should truly and properly be called the MAN Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. ii. 5. It was a wonder to Solomon, that God would dwell in that stately and magnificent temple at Jerusalem, 2 Chron. vi. 18. "But will God in very deed dwell with men on earth! Behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built?" But it is a far greater wonder that God should dwell in a body of flesh, and pitch his tabernacle with us, John i. 14. It would have seemed a rude blasphemy, had not the scriptures plainly revealed it, to have thought, or spoken of the eternal God, as born in time; the world's Creator as a creature; the Ancient of Days, as an infant of days.

The Heathen Chaldeans told the king of Babel, that the "dwelling of the gods is not with flesh," Dan. ii. 11. But now God not only dwells with flesh, but dwells in flesh; yea, was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

For the sun to fall from its sphere, and be degraded into a wandering atom; for an angel to be turned out of heaven, and be converted into a silly fly or worm, had been no such great abasement; for they were but creatures before, and so they would abide still, though in an inferior order or species of creatures. The distance betwixt the highest and lowest species of creatures, is but a finite distance. The angel and the worm dwell not so far asunder. But for the infinite glorious Creator of all things, to become a creature, is a mystery exceeding all human understanding. The distance betwixt God and the highest order of creatures, is an infinite distance. He is said to *humble himself, to behold the things that are done in heaven*. What a humiliation then is it, to behold the things in the lower world! but to be born into it, and become a man! Great indeed is the mystery of godliness. "Behold, (saith the prophet, Isa. xl. 15, 18) the nations are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are accounted to him less than nothing, and vanity." If, indeed, this great and incomprehensible Majesty will himself stoop to the state and condition of a creature, we may easily believe, that being once a creature, he would expose himself to hunger, thirst, shame, spitting, death, or any thing but

sin. For that once being a man, he should endure any of these things, is not so wonderful, as that he should become a man. This was the low step, a deep abasement indeed!

2. It was a marvellous humiliation to the Son of God, not only to become a creature, but an inferior creature, a man, and not an angel. Had he taken the angelical nature, though it had been a wonderful abasement to him, yet he had staid (if I may so speak) nearer his own home, and been somewhat liker to a God, than now he appeared, when he dwelt with us: for angels are the highest, and most excellent of all created beings: For their *nature*, they are pure *spirits*; for their *wisdom, intelligences*; for their *dignity*, they are called *principalities and powers*; for their *habitations*, they are stiled the *heavenly host*; and for their *employment*, it is to behold the face of God in heaven. The highest pitch, both of our holiness and happiness in the coming world, is expressed by this, we shall be *ισαγγελοι*, "equal to the angels," Luke xx. 36. As man is nothing to God, so he is much inferior to the angels; so much below them, that he is not able to bear the sight of an angel, though in a human shape, rendering himself as familiarly as may be to him, Judges xiii. 22. When the Psalmist had contemplated the heavens, and viewed the celestial bodies, the glorious luminaries, the moon and stars which God had made, he cries out, Psal. viii. 5. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of "man that thou visitest him!" Take man at his best when he came a perfect and pure piece out of his Maker's hand, in the state of innocency: yet he was inferior to angels. They always bare the image of God, in a more eminent degree than man, as being wholly spiritual substances, and so more lively representing God, than man could do, whose noble soul is immersed in matter, and closed up in flesh and blood: yet Christ chuseth this inferior order and species of creatures, and passeth by the angelical nature; Heb. ii. 16. "He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham."

3. Moreover, Jesus Christ did not only neglect the angelical, and assume the human nature; but he also assumed the human nature, after sin had blotted the original glory of it, and withered up the beauty and excellency thereof. For he came not in our nature before the fall, whilst as yet its glory was fresh in it; but he came, as the apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 3. "In the likeness of "sinful flesh," i. e. in flesh that had the marks, and miserable effects, and consequents of sin upon it. I say not that Christ assumed sinful flesh, or flesh really defiled by sin. That which was born of the Virgin was a holy thing. For by the power of the Highest (whether by the energetical command and ordination of the Holy Ghost, as some; or by his benediction and blessing, I

here dispute not) that whereof the body of Christ was to be formed, was so sanctified, that no taint or spot of original pollution remained in it. But yet though it had not intrinsical native uncleanness in it, it had the effects of sin upon it; yea, it was attended with the whole troop of human infirmities, that sin at first let into our common nature, such as hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, mortality, and all these natural weaknesses and evils that clog our miserable natures, and make them groan from day to day under them.

By reason whereof, though he was not a sinner, yet he looked like one: and they that saw and conversed with him, took him for a sinner; seeing all these effects of sin upon him. In these things he came as near to sin as his holiness could admit. O what a stoop was this! to be made in the likeness of flesh, though the innocent flesh of Adam, had been much; but to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh, the flesh of sinners, rebels; flesh, though not *defiled*, yet miserably *defaced* by sin! O what is this! and who can declare it! And indeed, if he will be a Mediator of reconciliation, it was necessary it should be so. It behoved him to assume the same nature that sinned, to make satisfaction in it. Yea, these sinless infirmities were necessary to be assumed with the nature, forasmuch as his bearing them was a part of his humiliation, and went to make up satisfaction for us. Moreover, by them our High-Priest was qualified from his own experience, and filled with tender compassion to us.

But O the admirable condescensions of a Saviour, to take such a nature! to put on such a garment when so very mean and ragged! Did this become the Son of God to wear? O grace unsearchable!

4. And yet more, by this his incarnation he was greatly humbled, inasmuch as this so veiled, clouded, and disguised him, that during the time he lived here, he looked not like himself, as God; but as a poor, sorry, contemptible sinner, in the eyes of the world; they scorned him. *This fellow said*, Matth. xxvi. 61. Hereby "he made himself of no reputation," Phil. ii. 6. It blotted his honour and reputation. By reason hereof he lost all esteem and honour from those that saw him, Matth. xiii. 55. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" To see a poor man travelling up and down the country, in hunger, thirst, weariness, attended with a company of poor men; one of his company bearing the bag, and that which was put therein, John xiii. 29. Who that had seen him, would ever have thought this had been the Creator of the world, the Prince of the kings of the earth? "He was despised, and we esteemed him not." Now which of you is there that would not rather chuse to endure much misery as a man, than to be degraded into a contemptible worm, that every body treads

upon, and no man regards it? Christ looked so unlike a God in this habit, that he was scarce allowed the name of a man; a *worm* rather than a *man*.

And think with yourselves now, was not this astonishing self-denial? That he, who from eternity, had his Father's smiles and honours, he that from the creation was adored, and worshipped by angels, as their God, must now become a footstool for every miscrant to tread on; and not to have the respects due to a man; sure this was a deep abasement. It was a black cloud that for so many years darkened, and shut up his manifestative glory, that it could not shine out to the world; only some weak rays of the Godhead shone to some few eyes, through the chinks of his humanity; as the clouded sun sometimes opens a little, and casts some faint beams, and is muffled up again. "We saw his glory, as of the only begotten Son:" but the world knew him not, John i. 14. If a prince walk up and down in a disguise, he must expect no more honour than a mean subject. This was the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, this disguise made him contemptible, and an object of scorn.

5 Again, Christ was greatly humbled by his incarnation, inasmuch as thereby he was put at a distance from his Father, and that ineffable joy and pleasure he eternally had with him. Think not, reader, but the Lord Jesus lived at a high and unimitable rate of communion with God while he walked here in the flesh: but yet to live by faith, as Christ here did, is one thing; and to be in the bosom of God, as he was before, is another. To have the ineffable delights of God perpetuated and continued to him, without one moment's interruption from eternity, is one thing; and to have his soul sometimes filled with the joy of the Lord, and then all overcast with clouds of wrath again; to cry, and God not hear, as he complains, Psal. xxxii. 2. nay, to be reduced to such a low ebb of spiritual comforts, as to be forced to cry out so bitterly, as he did, Psal. xxii. 1. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This was a thing Christ was very unacquainted with, till he was found in habit as a man.

6. And lastly, It was a great stoop and condescension of Christ if he would become a man, to take his nature from such obscure parents, and chuse such a low and contemptible state in this world as he did. He will be born, but not of the blood of nobles, but of a poor woman in Israel, espoused to a carpenter: yea, and that too, under all the disadvantages imaginable; not in his mother's house, but an inn; yea, in the stable too. He suited all to that abased state he was designed for; and came among us under all the humbling circumstances imaginable: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (saith the apostle) how that though he

“was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor,” 2 Cor. viii. 9. And thus I have shewn you some few particulars of Christ’s humiliation in his incarnation. Next we shall infer some things from it that are practical.

*Inference 1. Hence we gather the fulness and completeness of Christ’s satisfaction, as the sweet first-fruits of his incarnation.* Did man offend and violate the law of God? Behold, God himself is become man to repair that breach, and satisfy for the wrong done. The highest honour that ever the law of God received, was to have such a person as the man Christ Jesus is, to stand before its bar, and make reparation to it. This is more than if it had poured out all our blood, and built up its honour upon the ruins of the whole creation.

It is not so much to see all the stars in heaven overcast, as to see one sun eclipsed. The greater Christ was, the greater was his humiliation; and the greater his humiliation was, the more full and complete was his satisfaction; and the more completeness there is in Christ’s satisfaction, the more perfect and steady is the believer’s consolation. If he had not stooped so low, our joy and comfort could not be exalted so high. The depth of the foundation is the strength of the superstructure.

*Inf. 2. Did Christ for our sakes stoop from the majesty, glory and dignity he was possessed of in heaven, to the mean and contemptible state of a man? What a pattern of self-denial is here presented to Christians? What objection against, or excuses to shift off this duty, can remain, after such an example as is here propounded? Brethren, let me tell you, the pagan world was never acquainted with such an argument as this, to press them to self-denial. Did Christ stoop, and cannot you stoop? did Christ stoop so much, and cannot you stoop at the least? Was he content to become any thing, a worm, a reproach, a curse; and cannot you digest any abasement? Do the least slights and neglects rankle your hearts, and poison them with discontent, malice and revenge; O how unlike Christ are you! Hear; and blush in hearing, what your Lord saith in John xiii. 14. “If I then your Lord and Master, wash your feet; ye ought also to wash one another’s feet.” “The example obliges not, (as\* a learned man well observes) to the same individual act, but it obliges us to follow the reason of the example;” i. e. after Christ’s example, we must be ready to perform the lowest and meanest offices of love and service to one another. And indeed to this it obliges most forcibly; for it is as if a master, seeing a proud, sturdy servant, that grudges at the work he is em-*

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\* *Obligat nos ad rationem exempli, magis quam ad individuum actum.* Chamier. Tom. 5. l. 19. c. 7.●



ployed about, as if it were too mean and base, should come and take it out of his hand; and when he has done it, should say, doth your Lord and Master think it not beneath him to do it; and is it beneath you? I remember it is an excellent saying that \* Bernard hath upon the nativity of Christ: saith he, "What more detestable, what more unworthy, or what deserves severer punishment, than for a poor man to magnify himself, after he hath seen the great and high God, so humbled, as to become a little child? It is intolerable impudence for a worm to swell with pride, after it hath seen majesty emptying itself; to see one so infinitely above us, to stoop so far beneath us." O how convincing and shaming should it be! Ah how opposite should pride and stoutness be to the spirit of a Christian! I am sure nothing is more so to the spirit of Christ. Your Saviour was lowly, meek, self-denying, and of a most condescending spirit; he looked not at his own things, but yours, Phil. ii. 4. And doth it become you to be proud, selfish, and stout? I remember Jerom, in his epistle to Pamachus, a godly young nobleman, advised him to be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame; yea, saith he, if need be, I would not have you refuse to cut wood, and draw water for the saints: And what, saith he, is this to buffeting and spitting upon, to crowning with thorns, scourging and dying! Christ did undergo all this, and that for the ungodly.

*Inf. 3. Did Christ stoop so low as to become a man to save us? Then those that perish under the gospel, must needs perish without apology.* What would you have Christ do more to save you? Lo, he hath laid aside the robes of majesty and glory, put on your own garments of flesh, come down from his throne, and brought salvation home to your own doors. Surely, the lower Christ stooped to save us, the lower we shall sink under wrath that neglect so great salvation. The Lord Jesus is brought low, but the unbeliever will lay him yet lower, even under his feet: he will tread the Son of God under foot, Heb. x. 28. For such (as the apostle there speaks) is reserved something worse than dying without mercy. What pleas and excuses others will make at the judgment-seat, I know not; but once, it is evident, you will be speechless. And, as † one well observes, the vilest sinners among the Gentiles, nay, the devils themselves, will have more to say for themselves than you.

I must be plain with you; I beseech you consider, how Jews, Pagans, and Devils will rise up in judgment against you. The

\* *Quid magis indignum, quid detestandum amplius, quid gravius puniendum, quam ut videns Deum parvulum factum, homo se magnificet? Intolerabilis est impudentia, ut ubi sese exinanivit majestas, vermiculus infletur, et intumescat.* Bern. Serm. 1. de Nativ.

† *Vide Morning Exercise at St. Giles's in the Fields, p. 256.*

Jew may say, I had a legal yoke upon me, which neither I nor my fathers were able to bear; Christ invited me only into the garden of nuts, where I might sooner break my teeth with the hard shells of ceremonies, than get the kernel of gospel-promises.—In the best of our sacrifices, the smoke filled our temple; smoke only to provoke us to weep for a clearer manifestation. We had but the old edition of the covenant of grace, in a character very darkly intelligible: You have the last edition, with a commentary of our *rejection*, and the world's *reception*, and the Spirit's *effusion*. You had all that heart could wish.—I perish eternally, may the poor Pagan say, without all possibility of reconciliation, and have only sinned against the covenant of works; having never heard of a gospel-covenant, nor of reconciliation by a Mediator. O had I but heard one sermon! had Christ but once broke in upon my soul, to convince me of my undone condition, and to have shewn a righteousness to me! But woe is me! I never had so much as one offer of Christ.—But so have I, must you say that refuse the gospel: I have, or might have heard thousands of sermons; I could scarce escape hearing one or other shewing me the danger of my sin, and my necessity of Christ. But notwithstanding all I heard, I wilfully resolved I would have nothing to do with him. I could not endure to hear strictness pressed upon me: It was all the hell I had upon earth, that I could not sin in quiet.—Nay, may the devil himself say, it is true, I was ever since my fall maliciously set against God. But alas! as soon as I had sinned, God threw me out of heaven, and told me he would never have mercy upon me: and though I lived in the time of all manner of gracious dispensations, I saw sacrifices offered, and Christ in the flesh, and the gospel preached; yet how could all this chuse but enrage me the more, to have God, as it were, say, Look here, Satan, I have provided a remedy for sin, but none for thine! This set me upon revenge against God, as far as I could reach him. But alas! alas! had God entered into any covenant with me at all; had God put me on any terms, though never so hard for the obtaining of mercy; had Christ been but once offered to me, What do you think would I not have done? &c.

O poor sinners! Your damnation is just, if you refuse grace brought home by Jesus Christ himself to your very doors. The Lord grant this may not be thy case who readest these lines.

*Inf. 4.* Moreover; hence it follows, that *none doth, or can love like Christ: His love to man is matchless.* The freeness, strength, antiquity, and immutability of it, puts a lustre on it beyond all examples. Surely it was a strong love indeed, that made him lay aside his glory, to be found in fashion as a man, to become any thing, though never so much below himself, for our salvation.

We read of Jonathan's love to David, which passed the love of women; of Jacob's love to Rachel, who for her sake endured the heat of summer, and cold of winter; of David's love to Absalom; of the primitive Christians love to one another, who could die one for another: but neither had they that to deny which Christ had, nor had he those inducements from the object of his love that they had. His love, like himself, is wonderful.

*Inf. 5.* Did the Lord Jesus so deeply abase and humble himself for us? *What an engagement hath he thereby put on us, to exalt and honour him, who, for our sakes was so abused?* It was a good saying of \* Bernard, "By how much the viler he was made for me, "by so much the dearer he shall be to me." And O that all, to whom Christ is dear, would study to exalt and honour him, these four ways.

1. *By frequent and delightful speaking of him, and for him.* When Paul had once mentioned his name, he knows not how to part with it, but repeats it no less than ten times in the compass of ten verses, in 1 Cor. i. It was Lambert's motto, "None but Christ, "none but Christ." It is said of Johannes Milius, that after his conversion, he was seldom or never observed to mention the name of Jesus, but his eyes would drop; so dear was Christ to him. Mr. Fox never denied any beggar that asked an alms in Christ's name, or for Jesus' sake. Julius Palmer, when all concluded he was dead, being turned as black as a coal on the fire, at last moved his scorched lips, and was heard to say, *Sweet Jesus*, and fell asleep. Plutarch † tells us, that when Titus Flaminius had freed the poor Grecians from the bondage with which they had been long ground by their oppressors, and the herald was to proclaim in their audience the articles of peace he had concluded for them, they so pressed upon him, (not being half of them able to hear), that he was in great danger to have lost his life in the press; at last, reading them a second time, when they came to understand distinctly how their case stood, they shouted for joy, crying, *Σωτηρ, Σωτηρ*, "a Saviour, a Saviour," that they made the very heavens ring again with their acclamations, and the very birds fell down astonished. And all that night the poor Grecians, with instruments of music, and songs of praise, danced and sung about his tent, extolling him as a god that had delivered them. But surely you have more reason to be exalting the Author of your salvation, who, at a dearer rate, hath freed you from a more dreadful bondage. O ye that have escaped the eternal wrath of God,

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\* *Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi charior.* Bern.

† *Plutarch in vita Titi Flamini.*

by the humiliation of the Son of God, extol your great Redeemer, and for ever celebrate his praises !

2. *By acting your faith on him, for whatsoever lies in the promises yet unaccomplished.* In this you see the great and most difficult promise fulfilled, Gen. iii. 15. "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head;" which contained this mercy of Christ's incarnation for us in it: I say, you see this fulfilled; and seeing that which was most improbable and difficult is come to pass, even Christ come in the flesh, methinks our unbelief should be removed for ever, and all other promises the more easily believed. It seemed much more improbable and impossible to reason, that God should become a man, and stoop to the condition of a creature, than being a man, to perform all that good which his incarnation and death procured. Unbelief usually argues from one of these two grounds, Can God do this? or Will God do that? It is questioning either his *power* or his *will*; but after this, let it cease for ever to cavil against either. His power to save should never be questioned by any that know what sufferings and infinite burdens he supported in our nature: and surely his willingness to save should never be put to a question, by any that consider how low he was content to stoop for our sakes.

3. *By drawing nigh to God with delight,* "through the veil of Christ's flesh," Heb. x. 19. God hath made this flesh of Christ a veil betwixt the brightness of his glory and us: it serves to rebate the unsupportable glory, and also to give admission to it, as the veil did in the temple. Through this body of flesh, which Christ assumed, are all *decursus et recursus gratiarum*, "outlets of grace" from God to us; and through it, also, must be all our returns "to God again." It is made the great medium of our communion with God.

4. *By applying yourselves to him, under all temptations, wants and troubles, of what kind soever, as to one that is tenderly sensible of your case, and most willing and ready to relieve you.* O remember, this was one of the inducements that persuaded and invited him to take your nature, that he might be furnished abundantly with tender compassion for you, from the sense he should have of your infirmities in his own body\*. Heb. ii. 17. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." You know by this argument the Lord pressed the Israelites to be kind

\* *Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.* Lirg.  
Like you, an alien in a land unknown,  
I learn to pity woes, so like mine own. *Dryden.*

to strangers; for, (saith he) “you know the heart of a stranger,” Exod. xxii. 9. Christ, by being in our nature, knows experimentally what our wants, fears, temptations, and distresses are, and so is able to have compassion. O let your hearts work upon this admirable condescension of Christ, till they be filled with it, and your lips say,

*Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.*



## SERMON XIX.

### Of CHRIST'S Humiliation in his Life.

PHIL. ii. 8.

*And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.*

**T**HIS scripture hath been once already under consideration, and, indeed, can never be enough considered: It holds forth the humbled state of the Lord Jesus, during the time of his abode on earth. The sum of it was delivered you before in this point:

*Doct. That the state of Christ, from his conception to his resurrection, was a state of deep debasement and humiliation.*

The humiliation of Christ was proposed to you under these three general heads or branches; of his humiliation in his *incarnation*; his humiliation in his *life*; and his humiliation in his *death*. How he was humbled by incarnation, hath been opened above in the *18th sermon*. How he was humbled in his life, is the design of this sermon: yet expect not that I should give you here an exact history of the life of Christ. The scriptures speak but little of the private part of his life, and it is not my design to dilate upon all the memorable passages that the evangelists (those faithful narrators of the life of Christ) have preserved for us; but only to observe and improve those more observable particulars in his life, wherein especially he was humbled: and such are these that follow.

*First*, The Lord Jesus was humbled in his very infancy, by his circumcision according to the law. For being of the stock of Israel, he was to undergo the ceremonies, and submit to the ordinances belonging to that people, and thereby to put an end to them; for so it became him to fulfil all righteousness. Luke ii. 21. “And