

# SERMONS UPON PSALM CXXXI.

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## SERMON I.

*Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.—*  
Ps. cxxx. 1.

THE purpose of David in this psalm is both to exhort and direct the people of God constantly and perpetually to place all their hopes and confidence in God. He exhorteth them to hope, and directeth them in the right way of hoping and trusting God. He doth both by propounding his own example; wherein—

First, He professeth his humility, and so denieth the opposite of this hope, and that is presumption and self-conceit, ver. 1.

Secondly, By declaring his submission and absolute resignation of himself to the will of God. Both together teach us this lesson—

*Doct.* That an holy humble heart, that is content to live at God's finding, can best trust in God.

It must needs be so—

1. Partly in regard of God; for those that exalt themselves shall be humbled. He is a party against the proud: James iv. 6, 'He resisteth the proud,' *ἀντιτάσσεται*. Pride crosseth God's design of abasing all flesh before him.

2. Partly in regard of trust. Pride and self-conceit are contrary to trust, to the very nature of it; for it is an humble dependence upon God for all: Zeph. iii. 12, 'I will leave an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.' Whereas a proud spirit beareth up itself upon itself, its own merit and sufficiency. So if we seek great things for ourselves, and not refer ourselves to God, we set him a task to provide meat for our lusts. Therefore it is said, Heb. xiii. 5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' Implying that the heart must be purged from covetousness, ambitious affectation, or aspiring after worldly greatness, before it is fit to meddle with promises.

*Use.* Therefore, if we would trust in God, we must be sensible of sin and impotency to help ourselves, and, however matters be, refer all to God, with an humble and quiet mind.

I begin, first, with his profession of humility. Therein I shall a

little discourse—(1.) Of the exactness or integrity of it: (2.) The sincerity of it; (3.) The lawfulness and usefulness of it.

First, The integrity and exactness of it. He did carefully beware of all pride in heart, gesture, and practice. For you may observe three degrees—

1. Pride is seated in the heart; therefore he saith, ‘My heart is not haughty.’

2. It bewrayeth itself in the members and gestures of the body; therefore he saith, ‘Mine eyes are not lofty.’

3. It showeth forth itself in some unwarrantable actions besides our calling or beyond our power; therefore he saith, ‘I do not exercise myself in things too high for me.’ He that would be a complete humble man must show it in his heart, gesture, and behaviour.

Secondly, The truth and sincerity of it; for a doubt may arise how he could wholly acquit himself of pride, since it is called ‘pride of life,’ 1 John ii. 16, because it sticketh by us as long as we live; and the best of God’s children have been troubled with it to the last. Therefore one compareth it to the shirt, the garment which we last put off. The apostle Paul, who was an elect vessel, one rapt into the third heaven, found some seeds of pride in his heart, which would have sprung forth, but that God repressed them by a sharp correction: 2 Cor. xii. 7, ‘Lest I should be lifted up above measure, by the abundance of revelation, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me.’ I answer—

1. Not absolute perfection is here asserted, but gospel sincerity. He endeavoured to keep pride and ambition out of his heart, and did in a great measure prevail against it. Till we get rid of the flesh we shall never wholly get rid of pride; but if we watch and strive against it, and overcome it in any considerable measure, we are accounted and accepted as humble.

2. As to David’s instance; we have great evidences of his humility; though also some few signs of remaining pride.

Instances of his humility are these—

[1.] That he continued in his mean vocation as a shepherd, following the ewes great with young, till God called him to an higher course of life. He never affected the royal diadem, neither would it have been any grief of heart to him if God, passing him by, had made another king. When for his merit Saul called him to court, and he was to be the king’s son-in-law, he thought himself unworthy of that honour: 1 Sam. xviii. 22, ‘Seemeth it a light thing to be a king’s son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?’ When Saul was in his power, who chased him, and pursued him to the death, he was tender of ravishing the blessing, and therefore said, 1 Sam. xxiv. 7, ‘The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed;’ so 1 Sam. xxvi. 8, 9, ‘God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand this day.’ ‘Who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed and be innocent?’ These are not words of a man affecting the crown.

[2.] That he bore insufferable injuries and contempts with so much patience: 2 Sam. xvi. 10, ‘Let him curse, because the Lord hath said, Curse David.’

[3.] That he could love them that reprov'd him for his sins: Ps. cxli. 5, 'Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness; let him reprove me, and it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break mine head.' Far meaner people would not take it so kindly.

[4.] That he was so submissively ready to take what portion God would carve out for him, when God began to chastise him for his sins: 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26, 'And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here I am, let him do to me as it seemeth good to him.'

[5.] That in all his heroical acts he did not seek his own honour, but the glory of God: Ps. cxv. 1, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the glory.'

[6.] That in his whole dealing with God he durst not trust in his own righteousness, but wholly took sanctuary in the new covenant: Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' Now judge you whether a man that found all this in himself could not say, 'Lord, my heart is not haughty'?

Yet, notwithstanding this, David was not wholly divested of this evil habit of pride, but something of it remained in his heart; some strings of this evil root were found there. Why else doth he beg of the Lord to be kept back from presumptuous sins? Ps. xix. 14; in the Hebrew, from prides. He found some inclination, else why should he pray they had dominion over him? So when the people all about were subdued by him, he began to be drunk with worldly prosperity: Ps. xxx. 6, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.' Again, no man can deny but that his heart was lifted up with pride when he caused the people to be numbered from Dan to Beersheba, that he might know what a mighty king he was, 2 Sam. xxiv. 2, which vainglory of his cost him and the people dear. Yet, notwithstanding all these remnants of pride, he doth and might say, 'Lord, my heart is not haughty.'

3. Therefore I add, for the truth of his plea he appealeth to God; and from all those that are affected like David, God will accept of the appeal.

[1.] He could in truth of heart appeal to God: 'Lord, my heart is not haughty.' He appealeth to him who knoweth all things. Lord, from whom nothing is hid, thou knowest that this is the very disposition of my soul. If I have anything, it is from thee; it is thy providence which brought me from following the ewes great with young to feed and govern thy people.' Such an holy man would not rashly invoke God, and take his holy name in vain; but knowing his integrity, durst call God to witness. The saints are wont to do so upon like occasions; as Peter, John xxi. 17, 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.' They know they have a God that will not be deceived with any shows, and that he knoweth and approveth them for such as he findeth them to be. So Job doth in the sincerity

of his heart appeal to God : ' Behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high,' Job xvi. 19. So Jeremiah, chap. xvii. 16, ' I have not desired the evil day, Lord, thou knowest.' Bold men, that mind not what they say, may falsely and rashly appeal to God ; but it is one thing what some do in passion and with a troubled mind ; as Sarah, Gen. xvi. 5, ' The Lord judge between me and thee ;' and it is another thing what holy persons, divinely inspired, do upon deliberation, and having considered what it is to make an appeal to God out of the tranquillity of a good conscience, and upon new covenant terms.

[2.] From those that are affected like David, God will accept the appeal ; for in the account of God we are that which we sincerely desire and endeavour to be, and for the general course and tenor of our lives are, though there be some intermixtures of failing. David saith, ' Lord, my heart is not haughty ;' and yet he was not altogether free from pride. His profession respecteth his sincere purpose and constant endeavour, and that predominant disposition of his soul. God himself confirmeth such appeals by his own testimony : 1 Kings xv. 5, ' My servant David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, neither departed from all that which he had commanded him, save only in the matter of Uriah.' And yet we have many failings of David upon record. He sinned many other times and ways besides in the matter of Uriah. His distrust that he should perish one day by the hand of Saul, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1, when he had God's promise that he should out-live him. His deep dissimulation before Achish, especially when he tendered his service to him in the wars against Israel, 1 Sam. xxvii. 10. His rash choleric vow to destroy Nabal and all that belonged to him, 1 Sam. xxv. 22, when indeed he had done him, in rigour of justice, no wrong. His injustice to Mephibosheth, and that contrary to the kindness of his old trusty friend Jonathan, upon the bare suggestion of a servant and false informer, 1 Sam. xvi. 4, and then restoring but half when he knew the suggestion to be false ; he was blinded by reason of state, &c. His fond affection to Absalom, and taking his death with such impatience. His numbering the people, and perhaps some other sinful oversights, are recorded of David, as well as the murder of Uriah ; yet these are passed over in silence ; only his presumptuous sin is mentioned. Such a testimony also doth God give of Job, when he saith to Eliphaz the Temanite, Job xlii. 7, ' My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends, because ye have not spoke of me that which is right, as my servant Job.' Yet he himself confesseth that he had spoken amiss of God, ver. 3 and 6 ; and in the 3d verse, ' I have uttered that I understood not.' Therefore, ver. 6, he abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes. But these things, so inconsiderately spoken by him, fell from him besides his purpose, and out of mere human infirmity, and therefore not laid to his charge ; he was right in his main cause, though he had his failings. Rash expressions, in a fit of passion, are passed by, when there is not a corrupt disposition of heart. By all this it is shown that the plea of sincerity is allowed by God, though there be some mixture of failings and weaknesses.

Thirdly, The lawfulness and usefulness of it. Is not this boasting like the pharisee ? Luke xviii. 9, ' God I thank thee, I am not like

other men.' If David were thus humble, why doth he speak of it? Is he not guilty of pride while he seemeth to speak against pride? It is a saying of Austin's, *Magis Deo placet humilitas in malis factis, quam superbia in bonis factis*—Humility in bad actions is more pleasing to God than pride in good actions.

*Ans.* We must not conceive so of what was spoken through the instinct and inspiration of the Holy Ghost by such an holy person. This is spoken either as—(1.) A necessary vindication; or (2.) A necessary instruction.

1. As a necessary vindication against the censures and calumnies of his adversaries. Saul's courtiers accused him as aspiring after the kingdom; yea, his own brother taxed him of pride when he came first abroad: 1 Sam. xvii. 28, 'I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down to see the battle.' If his brother would calumniate his actions, much more might others. Now it is for the honour of God that his children, as they would not commit a fault, so they should not be under the suspicion of it; therefore he appealeth to God.

2. A necessary instruction; for whatsoever David said or wrote here, he said or wrote by the instinct of the Holy Ghost, that Israel may learn how to hope in God. Now herein David is a notable pattern of duty both to superiors and inferiors.

[1.] To superiors. God had required in his law, that when he had given them a king, their hearts were not to be lifted up above their brethren, Dent. xvii. 20. If any might seem to have cause to be lifted up, David much more; he was famous for notable exploits and heroical actions; he had vanquished the lion and the bear, vanquished Goliath, the great champion of the Philistines, waged great wars, and always returned a conqueror. If these things had been done by others, how would they vaunt themselves, and be puffed up with the thoughts of their own excellency! We see how mean people, upon far lighter occasions, are wont to boast.

[2.] To meaner people. If so great and powerful a king had neither an haughty heart, nor lofty eyes, nor high presumptions, surely they should be ashamed to be proud of lesser enjoyments and poor trifling actions.

As a pattern and instance of the power of grace. The grace of God is able to keep a man humble and lowly in any degree of excellency. David, a rich powerful king, a mighty conqueror, can appeal to God, and say, 'Lord, my heart is not haughty.' Vain man hath much ado to keep down his heart if conscious to any excellency, real or supposed; if wise, learned, honourable, rich. But though with man it is impossible, with God all things are possible.

Let me now come to the points. Time will only give leave to insist on the first clause, 'Lord, my heart is not haughty.' Thence observe two things—

First, That those that have any dealing with God should be able to plead that they are not proud and haughty.

Secondly, If we would root out and remove pride from us, we must begin first with the heart.

First, They should be far from pride that would have any dealing with God.

*Reasons.*

1. Because God is a great enemy to pride, and his word hath sufficiently declared how ill he is pleased with it. See Ps. cxxxviii. 6, 'Though the Lord be high, yet he hath respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off.' God is far exalted above all creatures, and it is an abasement to him to take notice of man or angel; yet his superlative grandeur doth not hinder him to take notice of the meanest lost sinner who humbleth himself before him, or of the poorest supplicant; but with the proud he will have no communion, but proceed most severely with them. So James iv. 6, 'God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble;' Prov. vi. 16, 17, 'These six things are an abomination to the Lord, yea, seven things doth the Lord hate; a proud look, a lying tongue,' &c. All these places, and many more, do show that this is an hateful sin to God. Now what is hateful to God should not be lovely to us. See Prov. viii. 13, 'The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.' *Eadem velle et nolle*, &c. We must will and nill the same things, if we would live in amity and friendship with God.

2. In the course of his providence, the Lord opposeth himself to them that lift up themselves, and giveth his grace and favour to them that abase themselves; so that his providence declareth his hatred as well as his word.

[1.] His judgments on the wicked are for this. What is God a-doing in heaven but debasing the proud and lifting up the humble? Nebuchadnezzar learned this lesson at his own bitter cost: Dan. iv. 37, 'All his works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.' God may suffer them to prosper for a while, yet he standeth in battle-array against them, and will take his fittest opportunity to bear down all them that live in the sin of pride: Isa. ii. 12, 'The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low.' The humble need not be afraid of his power, majesty, and wrath, but the proud shall not escape the effects thereof. In short, God hath an especial quarrel against proud persons, and hath special knowledge of them, and will find them out, and bring them low.

[2.] His sharp corrections on his people. One special reason of his smart discipline is to correct pride or prevent pride: Job xxxiii. 17, 'That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.' When God seeth his servants to be in danger of being lifted up, he provideth a sharp cure. Paul's thorn in the flesh was that he might not be exalted above measure. God will keep them low that will not keep their hearts low; sometimes by sore sickness, sometimes by bitter reproaches, sometimes by disgraceful sufferings; yea, sometimes by some scandalous and grievous fall.

[3.] Consider the reasons why the Lord hateth it so, and sets himself against it.

(1.) It is a sin in most direct opposition to God, and therefore God standeth in most direct opposition to it. It usurpeth his honour and glory, and sets self as an idol in his place; as if we had the power of our own affairs, and all esteem were due to us. The prince of Tyre is

charged with setting his heart as the heart of God, Ezek. xxviii. 2. Though we do not say it openly by so many explicit thoughts and words, we say it implicitly by secretly arrogating to ourselves glory and honour, or seeking to ourselves our own esteem and advancement in all that we do. This is like Reuben, who went in to his father's bed. God is the first cause and last end; we have all from God and for God, not from ourselves nor for ourselves.

(2.) Because it is cross to his design, especially in the gospel, wherein his grace is offered to the humble and penitent and broken-hearted, that no flesh might glory in his presence, 1 Cor. i. 29-31. God's design is to abase all flesh before him, that the glory may redound to him alone.

(3.) It is an imitation of the devil, God's great enemy and ours, who fell by pride and affectation of divine honour, and is the proudest creature and most discontented with his condition: 1 Tim. iii. 6, the apostle would not have a novice ordained, lest he 'fall into the condemnation of the devil;' that is, lest so great dignity suddenly bestowed upon him may tempt him to pride and vanity, and so bring the same ruin upon himself that fell upon the devil, who was tempted in like manner by that glorious condition wherein he was created, and for his pride was cast out of heaven into the torments of hell.

(4.) It is a contradiction to the Lord Christ, 'who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, and humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation,' Phil. ii. 6, 7; was not thrust down for robbery and usurpation, but came down, and lived a poor and mean life, that he might become a pattern and an example to us: Mat. xi. 29, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.' He went not before us in a life of pomp and ease and worldly glory, but meanness and abasement.

(5.) It is an unreasonable sin. How vain are all those things for which the hearts of men are wont to be puffed up! Usually pride feedeth upon empty shadows; and if any seem to arise out of any true worth and excellency, it is rather supposed and imaginary than really existing in us. What! are men proud of birth? Were not all our ancestors conceived and born in sin? and is not all blood of a colour? When the Jews were proud of their stock, the Lord telleth them their father was an Amorite and their mother an Hittite, Ezek. xvi. 2. Is it for our greatness and dignity? which, though it be never so great, will not warrant our pride; for our best estate is but vanity, brittle when it is brightest, Ps. xxxix. 9. We shall not long continue what we are, but death will level us with others, Ps. xlix. 10-12, and others will tread upon our graves, as we do upon the graves of our ancestors, who enjoyed the same honours before us. What is it we are proud of? acuteness of wit and singular erudition and learning? If it be not sanctified, our understanding will be our ruin: Isa. xxix. 10, 'The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes; the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.' By understanding we are undone. The devil is more subtle, Gen. iii. 1, yet a tormented creature. If it be sanctified, we shall see more cause to be humble than lifted up. Is it our riches we are proud of? 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world,

that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God.' Who would trust in such an uncertain thing, without a man, no more to us than rich trappings to an horse? Is it for grace? To whom is the glory due, to thee or God? 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'Who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?' Will you rob God to put the crown upon your own head? What a suspicion do you bring upon your gifts and graces, if you are proud of them, that they are rather common than saving, 1 Cor. viii. 1, 2, rather supposed and imaginary than real! Gal. vi. 3, 'If any man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.' Usually common gifts and common graces are of a more swelling nature.

(6.) Because of the mischiefs of pride, what was the bane of our first parents, and the whole world of mankind, but pride? What hath divided the church and tore it in so many factions but pride? Therefore the apostle, when he presseth to unity and like-mindedness, he giveth cautions against pride: Phil. ii. 1-3, 'Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory,' &c. What divideth friends and neighbours but pride? 'Only by pride cometh contention,' saith Solomon, Prov. xiii. 9. They that have a proud heart, envy superiors, contend with equals, disdain inferiors, they would shine alone in the earth. Why did Miriam and Aaron rise up against Moses, the meekest man upon earth? Nothing but their pride, Num. xviii. 2. Yea, was not this the cause of contention among the apostles themselves? They strove who should be greatest. Therefore Christ telleth them, Mat. xviii. 1-3, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot be my disciples.'

*Use.* Oh, then, if we would enjoy communion with God, let us remove pride far from us; all sorts of pride.

1. There is a pride which consists in impenitency and disobedience, which maketh us slight the great business of reconciliation with God through Christ: Ps. x. 4, 'The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God.' And also neglect the clearest and most necessary duties, which the word of God recommendeth to us: Neh. ix. 16, 'Our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments;' ver. 29, 'They dealt proudly, and sinned against thee.' What is pride if this be not, to contest and enter into the lists with God, and to set up our wills against the will of our Creator?

2. There is a pride which showeth itself by swelling against God's providence, entertaining mercies with disdain, crosses with anger. It venteth itself by unthankfulness for his mercies: 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26, 'Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up; therefore there was wrath upon him,' &c. Or slighting mercies: Mal. i. 2, 'I have loved you, saith the Lord; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?' Also by muttering and complaining of God's dealings with us, Lev. xxvi. 41. Now, opposite to this, a christian should always have a mean esteem of himself, flowing from a sense of his own sinfulness: 1 Cor. xv. 9, 'I am the least of the apostles,' &c. The undeserved goodness of God: 2



Sam. vii. 18, 'David sat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?' and kindly take all chastisements from him as less than our deserving.

3. There is a pride which consists in overvaluing ourselves, and showeth itself either in the mind and conceit or desires. In the mind and conceit, when we set an high price upon ourselves, and represent ourselves to ourselves in a feigned likeness: Rom. xii. 3, 'Let no man think of himself above what he ought to think.' Alas! we that are so well acquainted with ourselves and our own weakness should be inclined to prefer others in honour before ourselves, Rom. xii. 10. We know more by ourselves than we can by others. Let us not look upon ourselves in the glass of self-love, for there is nothing more fallacious than that glass: Prov. xvi. 2, 'All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirit;' if God put us into the balance. But when we look upon ourselves in the glass of self-conceit, everything seemeth double to what it is, and we think ourselves much wiser and better than we are. On the other part, we should desire no more esteem from others than God alloweth us to have; and not overvalue that neither: 1 Cor. iv. 3, 'With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment,' *ἐλάχιστον*. We should not make too great a matter of other men's thoughts of us; otherwise how soon will it be a snare to us! John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?' John xii. 42, 'Among the rulers many believed on him; but because of the pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.'

Lastly, There is another sort of pride, and that is seeking great things for ourselves; we must have such honour, such estates. Surely they ascribe too much to themselves that would prescribe to God at what rate they would be maintained. No; let him choose our portion for us, who is wiser than we, and knoweth what condition is best for us: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' Mat. v. 3. In the heart it is seated, and powerfully rooted.

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## SERMON II.

*Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.—*  
Ps. cxxxii. 1.

Two doctrines I proposed—

First, That whosoever would have any commerce with God should put pride far from them.

Secondly, That whosoever would put pride far from them must begin with the heart.

This latter point I must now insist upon—(1.) What pride is; (2.) How it bewrayeth itself; (3.) Why it begins with the heart.

First, What pride is. It is an evil so comprehensive and capacious, that it will hardly endure the limits of a definition. It is a sin, or corrupt disposition, by which the soul is lifted up by an inordinate esteem and admiration of our own real or supposed excellency, together with an affectation of honour and praise from others. There are two branches of it—(1.) Self-conceit; (2.) Vainglory.

1. Self-conceit, which is also twofold—(1.) When we ascribe to ourselves what we have not. (2.) When we transfer upon ourselves the praise of what we have. To boast of what we have not is folly. To boast of what we have is sacrilege, a robbing God of his glory.

[1.] The first sort of pride is very usual. Men that have nothing to be proud of are most conceited many times. Bloaty spirits are soonest puffed up, like bladders filled with wind; whereas solid worth, solid knowledge, solid grace, is least ostentatious. Empty vessels and shallow rivers make the greatest noise. The apostle Jude compareth seducers to clouds without water, Jude 12; and Solomon giveth us the true meaning of that expression: Prov. xxi. 14, 'Whoso boasteth of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.' They seem to look black, and promise to refresh the earth to make it fruitful, but give not one drop, being carried away with the winds; so these boast of the Spirit, and greater measure of gospel light, but give no relief to any poor thirsty soul that would understand holy and wholesome doctrine.

[2.] The other kind is when we transfer upon ourselves the glory of what we have; whereas we had it not from ourselves, nor for ourselves: 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive?' It is all given, and given of grace; not for our use and honour, but God's: 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' &c.; Luke xix. 16, 'Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.'

Affectation of honour and esteem from others. When men set an high price upon themselves, if others will not come up to their price, they are discontented. When a man hath made himself his own idol, he would have others come and worship him. There is an inordinate affectation of glory from men. All they do is to be seen and admired of men; to set off themselves as the idols of the world, for veneration and reverence; as the pharisees, to be seen of men, Mat. vi. 1, 5, 16, in alms, prayers, fastings. Therefore the apostle saith, 'Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another,' Gal. v. 26. An itching desire after estimation and applause is the evil which we speak of; we would have others prostrate themselves before the idol of those pretended or real excellences which we ourselves so much dote upon and admire.

Secondly, How it doth bewray itself. In thought, word, and deed, which are the usual operations of the human spirit.

1. In thoughts. As a man's temper is so are his musings; so will he talk and speak to himself by his own thoughts. An unclean person sets up a state of unclean representations in his own heart, and commits adultery there. A covetous person, his heart is exercised with worldly thoughts and covetous practices. So a proud person entertaineth his soul with self-admiring thoughts, and feeds his fancy with the echoes and suggestions of applause and honour from men, what they think

and speak of him. Therefore it is said, Luke i. 51, 'He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.' Proud men are full of imaginations. And all sins of thought are expressed by pride in that noted place, Prov. viii. 13; and we read of their musings in scripture: Dan. iv. 30, 'Is not this great Babel, which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and the honour of my majesty?' Thus men, in their private thoughts, are dreaming of the greatness and advancement of their families, the applause of the world, the vastness of their treasures, largeness of their inheritance, and glory of their successes and achievements. A man is become, by pride, his own flatterer and tickler, filleth his mind with self-admiring thoughts, the conceit of his own worth. This is to dream waking.

2. By words. When men dote upon themselves, they forget all bounds of modesty, and are trumpeters of their own praise: Prov. xxvii. 2, 'Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth.' Yet, in the rage and reign of pride, men will boast of the good things which they have or have done; as if all were lost that is not known and applauded by men. Proud boasters, Rom. i. 30. It is against reason that a man so partial and self-loving should be witness in his own cause. Let us do that which is praiseworthy, and let our deeds commend us rather than our own words.

3. By deeds; and this comprehendeth our gestures, vestures, and actions.

[1.] Our gestures. This scripture takes notice of haughty eyes, and so do many other. Under 'lofty eyes,' he comprehendeth every outward discovery of our pride, in gestures, vestures, speech, and behaviour. As long as we hang out apparently the ensigns of our vanity, we cannot account ourselves humble. But I begin with gestures, a lofty look or gait. Where pride is truly rooted out of the heart, there it will not show itself in the external gestures, in an haughty look and gait. The argument is firm and conclusive: My heart is not haughty, therefore mine eyes are not lofty. It will not hold backward, and have such a necessary truth: Mine eyes are not lofty, therefore my heart is not haughty, *non sequitur*, for some have the art to conceal their pride. But certain it is humility in the heart will take away pride out of the eyes, because the heart governeth the whole man. But the humble eye and gait doth not always argue an humble heart, as is evident in hypocrites. In vain do men boast of humility in their hearts who show forth pride in their gait and eyes. At least the show of pride giveth scandal and offence, and we must avoid all appearance of evil, 1 Thes. v. 22. More especially lofty eyes are abominable, David else would not with so much earnestness express his humility by this sign, that his eyes were not lofty. This is also plain by other scriptures: 'These six things are an abomination to the Lord; lofty eyes,' &c., Prov. vi. 16, 17. This bringeth up a troop of other faults. So Prov. xxi. 4, 'An high look, and a proud heart, and the ploughing of the wicked, is sin.' So Prov. xxx. 13, 'There is a generation, oh, how lofty are their eyes, and their eyelids are lifted up!' So it is said, Ps. xviii. 27, 'God will bring down high looks.' Now all these places show how careful we should be that we do not suffer pride to peep out. To nourish it in our hearts is a sin; to bewray it is a scandal as well as a

sin. Ezra saith, 'I durst not lift mine eyes to thee,' Ezra ix. 6. He considered his own sin and the sin of his people. So Luke xviii. 13, 'The publican stood afar off, and would not lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote his breast.' It is one law concerning Israel's king, Deut. xvii. 20, 'Not to lift up his heart above his brethren.' They will soon be stripped of all their glory. Much more should meaner people. David would not bear in his own house, Ps. ci. 5, 'One that hath an high look and a proud heart.' If a good man will not bear this, will God bear it?

[2.] In vestures. This also is a sign of pride; and it is the more odious because it is a mere external thing, like trappings to a horse. Clothing was the consequent of sin, and having the mark of our shame about it, it is mightily abused when it is made the ensign of our pride. And strange apparel is reprov'd in king's children: Zeph. i. 8, 'I will punish the princes and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.' How will those painted butterflies answer it to God, that abuse that which was appointed for health, warmth, and comeliness, into an occasion of pride and ostentation, whilst they affect superfluity and pomp in it, and that far above their rank? Vanity of apparel is a certain effect of vanity in your mind. Wisdom, meekness, and holiness should be your ornaments, 1 Peter iii. 4; and you think of no other adorning than vain and light apparel. By this you plainly tell the world what you are, vain and worthless, only lifted up in your own conceit. Usually a neglected inattentive soul dwelleth in the body that must be thus decked and adorned. In other cases men are careful to hide their sin; here they plainly bewray it; for you carry the badge of your pride abroad with you wherever you come, and proclaim that you are not ashamed of it, how hateful soever it be to God. It is as if you disclaimed Christ, the doctor of humility, and preferred the image of the devil before that of God. When God first made garments for man, he made them of the skins of the beasts, plain and simple. But I forbear.

[3.] In our actions.

(1.) By ambition. When we are continually affecting honour and greatness, and how to exceed others, contemning them in comparison of ourselves, or taking it ill that others should be more esteemed and preferred before us. The fault is first in the mind. Men will say, I am as good a man as such and such; I deserve as well as they; I see no reason why I should not be respected as well as others; and then seeking to advance and put forth ourselves before them, 3 John 9, 'Diotrephes loved the pre-eminence,' *φιλοπρωτεύων*; he would fain be first. When men affect precedency, and show it, it is an evident sign of pride. Many men mistake ambition; they think a desire of great places is only unlawful when it is sought by unlawful means, but the bare desire and affectation of greatness is sinful, and contrary to the rules of the gospel. We should refer our advancement to the fair invitation of God's providence, and tarry till the master of the feast biddeth us to sit higher. In our private choice, we should be contented with a tolerable supply of necessaries. Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, Luke xiv. 11; not, Whosoever is exalted. In the Olympic games, the wrestler did never put on his crown and garland, but it was

put on by the judge of the sports. The apostle telleth us, our Lord 'Glorified not himself as high priest, but he was anointed of God, as Aaron,' Heb. v. 5. If you do not stay for the call of providence, but advance yourselves, it is an untimely desire of promotion. Usually men are set to soar higher and higher, without setting any period to their towering thoughts.

(2.) Vainglory. When a man earnestly desireth praise and glory from men, and bewrayeth it in all his actions; when a man mindeth his own praise more than the glory of God, and is tickled and pleased with it, and all that he doth is to get himself a name, Gen. xi. 4. Now this is seen when you are marvellously pleased with it, as having obtained your end: Prov. xxxvii. 21, 'As a fining-pot for silver, and a furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise;' that is, tried by it; for a man may know his temper according as he is affected when he is praised or dispraised by others. He that admits of all praises, whether deserved or undeserved, that greedily hunteth after popular applause, that easily swelleth when he is commended, can bear no reproach or reproof patiently, is a weak vainglorious man; more especially he that seeketh to bring himself into request rather than Christ, and is willing and content to take to himself the glory due to God. Certainly that instrument seeketh to undermine God who usurpeth to himself the praise due to the supreme agent. Contrarily, Joseph: Gen. xli. 12, 'God shall give the king an answer of peace;' and the apostle: Acts iii. 16, 'His name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong.' In short, they that debase others to exalt themselves, is a wrong done to God, to set myself in his room; a wrong done to my neighbour, to rob one another, and blast him by rash censures, that I may set off myself alone, build my credit upon the ruins of his esteem.

Thirdly, Why must pride begin with the heart?

1. Because the heart is the proper seat and rise of pride. There would be none in the gesture, none in the vesture, none in the life, if it were not first in the heart; there is the root of it, and there it lieth hidden. Now why should we shake off the leaves and let alone the branches? or lop off the branches, and let alone the root? When the prophet would cure the brackishness of the waters, he did cast salt into the spring: 2 Kings ii. 24, 'He went to the spring of the waters, and cast in salt there.' The heart is the spring of actions: Prov. iv. 23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' In the purging out of all sins we must begin with the heart; so in the purging out of pride. Our Lord was angry with the pharisees for washing the outside of the platter: Luke xi. 39-41, 'First cleanse that within.' If the heart be humble, the eyes will be lowly, the speech humble, the garments humble, gait humble. If pride had a deadly wound in the heart, it would die away in the practice.

2. It is a sin of deep radication, and very powerful in the hearts of men. You will find it a very hard matter to subdue it in the heart, partly because it suiteth with self-love, which is natural to all. Men love themselves, and therefore esteem themselves and seek themselves. Selfishness is the life of pride, which consists in an excessive self-esteem, and a desire of excessive esteem from others, and to be magnified by them. Now self is the great idol of the world. A man is not easily dispossessed of an

inordinate love to himself. This is a corruption so deep in the heart of man, that it may be called his natural inclination; and it must be changed into a new nature, which principally consisteth in the love of God, which leadeth and directeth all our actions to his glory. Self-love is the heart of original sin, as the love of God is the heart of the new creature. So that, this considered, you may easily know what man is by nature, an inordinate self-lover and self-esteemer; and as he is, so will he act. Partly because there is not such a turpitude in this as in other sins. There seemeth to be a kind of bravery in it; therefore no sin is of such an easy insinuation and such a difficult removal. Surely a proud person is hardly cured; there is more hope of a fool than of him. Drunkenness, adultery, unmanneth us; this seemeth to make us gods. Indeed it is easy to prove that pride is a base sin, and there is no such weak heart as a proud imperious heart: Ezek. xvi. 30, 'How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord, seeing thou doest all these things?' It doth embase the spirit while it seemeth to greaten it. No temper so vile and servile as that of the proud aspiring person. *Curvatur obsequio, ut aliis dominetur*; he basely flatters others that he may rule over them. Absalom kisseth the people, 2 Sam. xv. 5, that he may win them to him. *Oscula et omnia serviliter pro imperio*. They will do base things to make way for their advancement. Those spirits that are proud and insulting, none more fawning and base for their own advantage. Besides, he is so weak, he is little able to bear a scorn or a frown. Partly because it is natural. We all suck it in with our milk. That it is a very natural sin appeareth by the experiences. One is, that it taketh with us upon a small occasion, a fair garment, a lock of hair, a good horse, or a dog, &c. It is a weed that groweth in any ground; nothing so high, nothing so low, but pride can make use of it, though never so contrary; proud of humility; nay, rather than not be proud, some will be proud of their sin, glory in their shame, Phil. iii. 19. A thing so catching is certainly natural. Again, it is a sin that puts us upon most self-denial. How will men travail and rack their spirits to serve their ambition or vainglory! As charity endureth all things and suffereth all things, so doth pride. How will men pinch to feed their pomp! Prov. xii. 9, 'He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread;' that is, flaunteth and maketh a fair show in the world, when at the same rate he might live comfortably in a meaner garb and equipage; as we see many live above their rank and condition, and can part with all their solaces and conveniences of life to supply their pomp and state, and are content with an hungry belly to clothe a proud back.

Once more: It is a very natural sin, because it is at the bottom of other sins. Covetousness is pride's purveyor; though in some sense it be the root of all evil, yet it hath a deeper root, a desire to make ourselves and ours great. It is said, Hab. ii. 5, 'He is a proud man, and therefore enlargeth his desire as hell.' We scrape, and spare, and busy ourselves to advance ourselves and families, and that we may shine alone in the earth.

3. The third reason why he that would root out pride must begin with his heart is, because it is a close sin, that seeketh to disguise itself in the practice. It is a sin that is ashamed of itself, and there-

fore it goeth under the mask of humility, or some other pretence. If pride blow a trumpet, it is to call the poor within hearing, Mat. vi. 2. Now this cheat will not be discovered unless we look to the heart. If people be vain and flaunting in their apparel, it is to keep up their necessary repute in their place. Men dare not hunt after praise but by stealth, and sail by a side-wind to it, not in a straight line. They know it is a prohibited commodity, not lawful to be purchased in the open market; but it must be gotten underhand and by stealth. Direct pride is odious to the proud person himself, therefore he useth stratagems and devices, and seemeth to beat back their praise when it cometh to them at the first hop, that they may the better take it at the rebound; apparently will discommend themselves, but their hearts tell them they would not be believed, and take it angrily if you do believe them. If pride hath a mind to censure others, the censure is always prefaced with a commendation; as an archer draweth back his hand that he may let fly the arrow with the more force. They commend with a 'but,' which is a stab at the heart of another man's credit. If pride hath a mind to affect some higher place, men will pretend a desire of doing more good, and of glorifying God in an higher station; but this is but pretence, because the serving of God is least in their minds. We desire an higher condition before we have conquered all the temptations to which a lower is exposed. We should be faithful in a little first, trusty, watchful, vigilant in our former station, ere we can look after greater matters and greater honour in the world. Plants that thrive well in a valley soon wither and are blasted on the top of a mountain. But such men are eagerly set to soar higher and higher, setting no period to their towering thoughts. Besides, the rankest pride will sometimes appear in an humble garb; but humility in the gesture and outward behaviour is but counterfeit while the heart is lofty. Some, whose hearts were not broken, yet would hang the head like a bulrush for a day, Isa. iviii. 5, erewhile seemed to be deeply affected with sin and misery; but this is like ice in giving weather, thawed at top, but hard at bottom. Ahab went softly, and was in outward show very humble, 1 Kings xxi. 27, affected for the present, but his heart not subdued to God. Absalom was in show very humble, courting the meanest of the people, 2 Sam. xv. 2-5, but it was for his ambitious ends. So many take on a veil of humility to deceive men and mock God; but a bladder is not more blown with wind than they are swollen with pride. There are two extremes. Some think pride only consists in outward things, as vestures, gestures, modesty of eyes and speech. Thus many of the popish monks and friars place much of their religion in their exterior mortification, when their hearts are full of the conceits of self-righteousness. Among us, the quakers cry out upon the pride of others, and by their plain garb pretend to avoid it; yet how conceited of themselves and obstinate! Very ignorant, yet scornful of a gospel ministry that should teach them better! The other extreme is, men will pretend their hearts are humble though their eyes are lofty, their apparel vain, and by all external signs they show their folly, pride, and luxury, in their garb, their entertainments, their household furniture. These miserably deceive themselves; for if the heart were humble, the eyes would not be lofty, nor would they display the ensigns of their vanity. Well, then, from

all this you may see what need there is that the heart should be purged of pride.

*Use.* To persuade us to purge out this leaven of pride. It cannot be purged out at once, but it must be mortified and subdued more and more. Daily labour and diligence is necessary for this end.

The means are these—

First, Frequent examination of ourselves; for self-acquaintance breedeth humility. No man extolleth himself but he that knoweth not himself. Therefore the best way to take down pride is to consider often what we have been, what we are, and what we deserve.

1. What we have been. Let us often consider the horrible filthiness of our corrupt nature, stinking worse than any carcass before God. Take the softest notion of original sin, we wanted a righteousness to place before God: Ps. li. 5, 'I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' We wanted strength to serve him: Rom. viii. 7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' We had nothing to incline us to God or commend us to him. Yea, not only an impotency, but an averseness. Partly out of carnal liberty: Rom. viii. 7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity to God.' Partly through sensuality, or addict-edness to present things grateful to the flesh: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh.' Partly through legal bondage: Gen. iii. 7, 'The eyes of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked;' ver. 10, 'I heard thy voice in the garden, and I hid myself, because I was naked.' Through carnal liberty our hearts were averse from him as a lawgiver; through bondage, as a judge: Col. i. 21, 'You that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works.'

2. After grace received, mixed principles, and therefore mixed operations, flesh and spirit, law and gospel, Gal. v. 17. If we consider in what state our soul is, what our actions are, how polluted with a tang of the flesh, how little comfortable sense of the love of God, we should soon see that we still carry about with us the cause of a deep humiliation in our bosoms, and to cry out with the publican, Luke xviii. 13, 'Lord, be merciful,' &c.; or with Paul, Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Besides your wants and defects, consider the loathsome corruption of your souls, which follow you wherever you go. The sins of our best duties are enough to humble us, to have such low conceptions of God, such heartless prayers, &c.

3. Consider what we have deserved. The eternal wrath of God, due to us for sin. It is a wonder that he doth not turn us into hell every moment, and that fire doth not come forth from his jealousy to consume us, who are ever and anon tripping in his service.

You will say, Blessed be God, we are escaped by Christ; we are passed from death to life.

*Ans.* I do not tell you what God will do, but what you have deserved; and this not to weaken your confidence, but to humble your hearts. Now it is enough for that, that you had once the sentence passed upon you, and have had the rope, as it were, about your necks; that you have been at the gates of hell, and might have entered in, but for the



grace of your Redeemer. Besides, you deserve it still; your daily sins and best actions deserve the wrath of God. And such a sense of it is still necessary as quickens to thankfulness, and prays for pardon, and promoteth to humility; and you turn grace into wantonness, and abuse it, if it lessen any of these acts. Well, then, though God forgive us, we must not forget we were once as bad as the worst, and children of wrath, even as others, Eph. ii. 3. We must still condemn ourselves when God justifieth us, and set our sins ever before us though God do cast them behind his back. Now shall such creatures as we be proud, so sinful, so liable to the curse, whose righteousnesses are as filthy rags? Isa. lxiv. 6.

Secondly, Frequent communion with God in prayers and praises; for so we more and more come into the knowledge of God, and a sight and sense of his majesty and glory; and a serious sight of God will humble us: Isa. vi. 5, 'I am unclean, for I have seen the Lord of hosts;' Gen. xviii. 27, 'I am but dust and ashes;' 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.' Can they be proud that have so often to do with an holy and glorious God? Surely one glimpse of his majesty will take down thy self-exalting thoughts. The stars differ from one another in brightness and glory, but when the sun appeareth they are all obscured, and those differences unobserved. So when we compare ourselves with men, we seem great, wise, powerful; but God, rightly apprehended, lesseneth us in our opinion, estimation, and affection. He is all, we are nothing but what he maketh us to be. All the creatures to him are nothing, less than nothing, Isa. xl. 17; nothing in opposition to him; nothing in comparison of him; nothing in exclusion of him. Now the mind should be often seasoned with these thoughts, as surely they will where men have much to do with God, and are often with him, if they be serious in their addresses to him.

Thirdly, Constant watchfulness, especially when we are most in danger of this sin; then we should keep a double watch. Pride is incident to all, but especially to those who are ennobled with any excellency of birth, honour, or estate, or parts, or office. Few are able to master their comforts; they are too strong wine for weak heads. To learn to abound is the harder lesson, Phil. iv. 12. When God lifteth them up, they lift up themselves; the wind of strong applause soon oversets a little vessel. Even gracious persons may be tainted. Pride once crept into heaven, and then into paradise; and it is hardly kept out of the best heart. Christians are not so much in danger of sensual lusts as of this sin; it groweth upon us many times by the decrease of other sins; as mortified, so proud: are ministers by their office: 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'Not a novice, lest, lifted up by pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.' But withal, those are most prone that rise out of the dunghill and from a low estate to great wealth and honour; partly because they are not able to digest such a sudden and unusual happiness; partly because they look less to God, and more to their own prudence and industry: Hab. i. 16, 'Sacrifice to their own net.' Now all these should watch: Deut. viii. 14, 'Take heed lest thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God;' 1 Tim.

vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches.' The honourable should watch, the minister watch, the gifted watch, but especially those whom God hath more than ordinarily blessed with worldly increase, Ps. cxix. 70, 71.

Fourthly, Use those things with fear which may feed your pride, and so avoid all occasions of being lifted up. As, for instance, do not look upon your graces and privileges without looking upon your infirmities, which may be a counterbalance to you: Mark ix. 24, 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' There is much corruption still remaineth in us, and often gets the advantage of us in thought, word, and deed. Never reflect upon your praises, but remember your imperfections, which the world seeth not, the many sins which you are conscious unto, and how much more you deserve reproofs than praises; And if you will thoroughly slight the honour and vainglory of the world, never count yourselves humble, till you are more willing to be admonished than praised, reprov'd than flattered. It is the proud man that despiseth reproof, but the humble prizeth it. Instances of the one: Amaziah to the prophet: 2 Chron. xxv. 16, 'Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldst thou be smitten?' The false prophet Zedekiah to Micaiah: 2 Chron. xviii. 23, 'Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to thee?' The pharisees to Christ: 'Are we blind also?' John ix. 39, 40. Holy and humble men are of another temper. Job did not despise the cause of his servants when they contended with him, Job xxx. 13, 14; David: Ps. cxli. 5, 'Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness.' This is a notable remedy against pride, to bear a faithful reproof, and take it in better part than praises and acclamations. Again, when you reflect upon your enjoyments, consider your account, Luke xii. 48. What will ye do when ye shall appear before the tribunal to answer for all this honour and estate? Surely such a day and such a reckoning should damp men, and quench all self-exalting thoughts. Never look upon your afflictions, but consider the mercies yet continued, notwithstanding your ill-deservings, Ezra iii. 19, that we may not murmur, which is an effect of pride, but submit to God's chastisements; that is the way to increase humility; for afflictions are humbling occasions, and so must be improved.

Fifthly, The example of Christ. There was not a more excellent person, nor more worthy, in all the world. Now what was his life but a lecture of humility? Mat. xi. 29, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart;' 'He sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him,' John v. 41. That is our business as well as Christ's; not to seek ourselves, but to please God and glorify God. He chose a mean life, withdrew himself when they would make him a king, John vi. 15; came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, Mat. xx. 28. Vain men would be admired of all, are desirous of worldly power and glory; but this is contrary to the Spirit of Christ. Surely we should dress ourselves by this glass. The meek, humble, lowly mind is an express resemblance of Christ, as pride is of the devil. When Christ came to save us, he would not choose a life of pomp, but poverty. He submitted to be conceived in the womb of a maiden, took the form of a

servant, was laid in a manger, sacrificed two pigeons. He lived in the world as a man of sorrows, born of mean parents, working at their trade. Justin Martyr saith he made ploughs or yokes: 'Is not this the carpenter?' Mark vi. After he entered into the ministry, he was scorned, opposed by men, preached out of a ship to people on the shore. Finally, he humbled himself to the death, the death of the cross. Now the same mind should be in you that was in Jesus, Phil. ii. 5. Unless you think it a disgrace to imitate him, either you must be humble, or seek another lord and master.

Sixthly, Thoughts of death, and the great change that we must once undergo, should still keep us humble. This flesh, which thou deckest with so much art and ornament, must shortly become a dead carcass, removed out of sight, that it may not become offensive to those that most love and prize thee, and rot in the grave, and become food for worms. Dust we were in our composition, and dust we must be in our dissolution, Gen. iii. 19. What is viler than dust? Eccles. xii. 7, 'Our dust shall return to the earth as it was.' We do but for a while act a part upon the stage of the world, and then we must be unclothed; as he that acteth the king in the comedy, and then goeth off and is a poltroon, as before; he vaunteth on the stage for a while, then *ad staturam suam redit*—Seneca. Though his excellency mounteth unto the heavens, yet within a while he perisheth, as his own dung, Job xx. 5–8. Our ornaments must be left behind us.

Seventhly, A gift sanctified, though never so mean, is more than the greatest gifts that puff us up. It holdeth good in all things. In estate, the truest contentment is to be kept humble in the enjoyment of it, James i. 10. The rich, in that he be made low. So for honour; it is not the outward splendour which is our happiness, but the humble mind. To be *minimus in summo*, least at the highest, like a spire or pyramid, is an argument of a great spirit. So for parts, the humble christian is the better qualified, 1 Cor. viii. 1. Knowledge puffeth up, charity edifieth. So grace; the less conceited, the more grace. Pride starveth every grace, but humility feedeth it. It is the humble soul which hath the solid comforts, and hath made most progress in religion.

Eighthly, Consider the evils of pride, both as to sin and punishment.

1. As to sin. It puts us upon other sins, murmuring against God, contempt of others: Prov. xxi. 24, 'Haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth with proud wrath.' Contention with them: 'He that is proud in heart stirreth up strife,' Prov. xxviii. 25. Envy; Saul eyed David ever afterward, 1 Sam. xviii. 9. An evil eye: Mat. xx. 24, 'When the disciples heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.' Censuring: James iii. 1, 'Be not many masters.'

2. Evils of punishment. Others cannot be expected, since the proud are so odious to God: Prov. xvi. 5, 'Whosoever is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.'

[1.] The judgments of God against the proud are sure: Prov. xxix. 23, 'A man's pride will surely bring him low.' So Prov. xvi. 5, 'Though hand join in hand.' All the world shall not keep him, as that doth not keep down his own spirit. God will cross him in his person or posterity: Prov. xv. 25, 'The house of the proud shall be destroyed.'

[2.] It is swift. Judgment cometh upon other sins with a slow pace, but always treadeth on the heels of pride, in that instant wherein they exalt themselves. Nebuchadnezzar, when his heart was lifted up and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from the kingdom, Dan. v. 20. The angels fell in that instant. Herod adored as a god, and immediately eaten up of worms, Acts xii. We lose our children, estate, parts, by some sudden stroke of providence, when we grow proud of them.

[3.] It is shameful; that God may pour the more contempt on them: Prov. xi. 2, 'When pride cometh, then cometh shame.' Not only ruin, but shame; Herod punished by lice, Pharaoh by gnats and flies, Miriam by leprosy; Goliath falleth by a stone out of a shepherd's sling.

[4.] It is impartial. Not only upon Pharaoh, Herod, Haman, but his own people. Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 26, 27, died without being lamented. Hezekiah: 2 Chron. xxxii. 45, 'His heart was lifted up, therefore there was wrath upon him.'

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### SERMON III.

*Neither do I exercise myself in great matters, nor in things too high for me.—Ps. cxxx. 1.*

HERE is the third sign of David's humility, that he did not affect or attempt great things, above his power, or beyond his calling, 'Neither do I,' &c. The word for 'exercise' signifieth also to walk; and the word for 'too high' signifieth also wonderful.

This part of the profession may be understood either—

First, Of his study, and inquiries of his mind, that he did not search out the hidden things of God. There are certain things which surpass the light and capacity of human understanding: Ps. cxxxix. 6, 'This knowledge is too wonderful for me, I cannot attain unto it.' So Job, when he had censured God's providence, chap. xlii. 3, 'I have uttered things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.' To presume to dive into or comprehend the counsels of God is an act of pride, because it is a presumption beyond man's ability.

Secondly, Or of his practice, that he did not aspire after great things, nor seek to wrest the kingdom out of the hands of Saul. He would not step forward, nor backward, but as God directed him; which certainly was a great effect of humility and modesty in David, though the promises of God gave him such hope, and the persecutions of Saul irritated him. And therein becometh a pattern to the people of God, that they should not aspire to nor look after worldly greatness, but be contented with the condition and estate of life wherein God placeth them; and our utmost ambition should be to be serviceable to God and his people, without presuming beyond the bounds of our

calling or strength to manage things: Jer. xlv. 5, 'Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.'

Which of these senses to prefer is not easy to know. Interpreters are divided. I will frame the doctrine so as to comprise both.

*Doct.* That humble souls do not exercise themselves in great matters, nor in things too high for them.

First, I shall consider how many ways this may be done.

Secondly, I shall show that it is contrary to humility so to do.

*First,* How many ways this may be done. First, I shall take the former distinction.

First, In point of understanding, when they search out and presume to understand things which God hath not revealed. The general rule is, Deut. xxix. 29, 'The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the revealed things belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.' Our business is to study our duty, which is plain and open; and for great matters, and things too high for us, we may, without any great loss or danger, let them alone.

Now these great matters that are too high for us are of two sorts—(1.) Some things that exceed the capacity of all men; (2.) Some things that are above our particular capacity, or the measure of our apprehension, or the limits of our vocation and calling.

1. Some things exceed the capacity of all men, and are too high for us to judge of. Now these things may be ranked in two classes—(1.) When men reject any revealed truth because they know not the cause; or (2.) When they neglect any present duty because they know not the events.

[1.] When we reject any apparent truth or doctrine revealed in the scriptures because it exceedeth our capacity to understand all the causes and reasons of them. This is to exercise ourselves in matters too high for us, and to set up our reason in opposition to God's revelation. As many deny the Trinity, and the incarnation of the Son of God, because they cannot conceive or understand how these things can be. Others deny the creation of the world, because they cannot apprehend what God did, or wherein he was employed, during all that infinite space of time before he proceeded to the creation. In many other cases they will not believe the truth, because they understand not the causes thereof; as God's decrees of predestination and preterition, because they cannot reconcile this with the justice of God and their prejudices and preconceptions, though it be clearly revealed in the word, that while the children were yet unborn, and had done neither good nor evil, yet 'Esau have I hated, and Jacob have I loved,' Rom. ix. 10, 11. So many deny the institution of Adam as a common person, in whose act all his posterity were concerned, though it be a truth clearly revealed in the scripture. These, and many other things, are propounded to be believed, not vexed with anxious inquiries. God dealeth with us here as physicians with their patients. They give pills, not to be chewed, but swallowed. If chewed, they are cast up again by proud reason; if swallowed, they prove an wholesome remedy to us. We are to acquiesce in the testimony of God, made evident to us by other reasons, though we cannot reconcile them with

the conceits of our shallow and corrupted reason. So many deny the providence of God because of some seeming incongruities, by the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous, and so cry up chance instead of God's wise and holy government. Surely we exercise ourselves in things too high for us when we will still be inquiring into the causes and reasons of all things. As why God from eternity decreed this and that, in his providence doeth this or that. Why he would not send his Son for fallen angels as well as for fallen man, when one angel, as to the dignity of his nature, is more precious than a thousand men. Why Christ would save one thief upon the cross, and not both. Why he will execute his judgments upon his people by the wicked, and afterward, when he hath used the rod, throw it into the fire. Why he will visit the sins of the fathers on the children. Why Achan's family was to be burned with him, Josh. vii. ; and an hundred such things, which God hath hidden from us. Yea, some will deny the immortality of the soul, because they know not how it is caused, by seminal traduction or immediate creation. So the work of God's differencing grace, because they understand not the way of it. It is endless to follow all the exceptions of vain man against the doctrine of God, and how the pride and arrogancy of reason vents itself against divine revelation.

In practical matters, some will question the Spirit's dwelling in believers, because they cannot understand the manner. Some saving grace, communion with God, or praying in the Holy Ghost, as if they were but fancies. Some truths cannot be understood without experience, and it is only sanctification that giveth that experience; therefore unsanctified persons take them for fancies.

[2.] This pride showeth itself in the desire of the knowledge of future events, either concerning the church of God, ourselves, or others; and many are so set upon this, that they will have figures cast, unlawful arts used, seek unto wizards and them that have familiar spirits, Isa. viii. 19. But whether they use lawful or unlawful means, the scripture disapproveth this vain curiosity and desire to know future contingencies, as arguing a distrust of God; for true godliness requireth we should trust ourselves blindfold in his hands, and obey him though we do not know what will come of it; as Abraham did, Heb. xi. 8. But we are very anxious about futurities; we would know what Christ will do with the church, what with ourselves, what with others. It better becometh us, in every condition, to know what we should do than what we shall be. It doth not become us to understand events, but it doth greatly become us to understand our duty. But our minds run upon this. Sometimes we are inquiring about the church, 'Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' But he answers, 'It is not for you to know the times,' &c., Acts i. 6, 7. So we desire to know our own destiny, whether we shall have prosperity or adversity, die a violent or a natural death, at home or abroad. We desire to know the time when our affliction shall cease: Ps. cxix. 8, 'How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?' David was surprised with this infirmity. We are weary of sufferings, and would fain know an end. So for others: John xxi. 21, 22, 'What shall this man do? If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to

thee? follow thou me.' Peter would fain know what should become of John, for which he was checked of Christ, as meddling with that which concerned him not. He bids him keep to his duty. It is vain curiosity, when we have so much needful work upon our hands, to desire to know what shall become of us and ours in this lottery of human affairs. Do your duty, and venture upon God's providence. Consider what an horrible diffidence and distrust of God it is that we cannot acquiesce in his wise and holy government, whose wisdom, power, and goodness is infinite. We suspect that he will not perform the part of a father and righteous governor to us, and therefore we dare not trust ourselves with his providence, but we must know beforehand how the event will be cast.

2. Some things are above our particular capacity, and measure of our apprehension, and the limits of our vocation. The apostle biddeth us: Rom. xii. 3, to 'be wise to sobriety, as God hath dealt to every one the measure of faith.' But men forget their ignorance, shallowness, and incapacity, and, though never so empty, take upon them to judge of all controversies in religion, as if they were the most knowing. Therefore the scripture layeth in so much caution against this; as, 'Lean not to thine own understanding;' and again, 'Be not wise in thine own eyes;' and Isa. v. 21, 'Woe to them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight;' Prov. xxvi. 12, 'Seest thou a man wise in his own eyes, there is more hope of a fool than of him;' Prov. xxvi. 5, 'Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.' And in many other places; that we might consider what a vanity it is to be meddling in things above our reach and measure of understanding. Many will run before they can go; mind controversies before they have well digested the necessary saving and practical truths. The weak must govern all, and model churches, when the Lord knoweth they are unskilful in self-government and the vitals of christianity. Who were most forward in the divisions of Corinth but the weak christians, who had need of milk, and not of strong meat, as the apostle showeth, 1 Cor. iii. 1-3. Certainly there is a certain order of truths, and that one presupposeth another; and the knowledge of the lower truths is required before we can attend to the higher. And till their understandings be prepared by a sound practical knowledge of the ordinary truths, they cannot well understand the higher. But it is a wonder to see the pride and arrogance of some ignorant men, who will confidently pass a censure on things they understand not, as if they were as thoroughly acquainted with them as the best, and scornfully call that an error which is the precious truth of Christ. These would go to the top of the stairs without ascending by the lower steps; or like hasty children, that will undertake to read before they can spell; and will determine great points when they have neglected the necessary truths which make way for the knowledge of them.

Secondly, I shall prove that this intermeddling with things too high for us is pride. I shall prove it by these steps—

1. It is certainly a great disease incident to mankind to contemn things easy, and to busy themselves about things hidden, difficult, and forbidden. Needless speculations and curiosities are a sort of knowledge that bringeth more pain than pleasure. This is a disorder and a disease; partly because reason will tell us that things necessary should

be preferred before arbitrary, and therefore things necessary to practice should be preferred before abstruse things and unprofitable. Partly because the most obvious truths are most necessary and most useful; as the Lord, in great goodness, hath made the most useful and necessary things the most common. Those things without which we cannot live are obvious, but jewels, pearls, and gold are hard to come by; we go for them to far countries, dig deep for them; but bread and food is at hand, and brought home to our doors. So in the business of religion; those points which are absolutely necessary to salvation are obvious to every man's understanding, and are in every man's mouth; intricate disputes lie more off, and are not everywhere found. The truths we live by, as the creation, fall and redemption by Christ, the necessity of holiness, the hopes of eternal life, are plain and clear; but yet these are least considered, believed, or improved. We learn them by rote, but seldom consider of their truth, weight, and consequence. These are too common and familiar to be regarded by us. We desire unvulgar notions, abstruse speculations. Partly because the mind is so weak, and time so short, that we cannot attend to everything. Surely in all reason we should attend upon the most weighty things; there is no loss in being ignorant of other things; and therefore, when we have so little time that it scarce sufficeth for the main things of our salvation, to spend this either upon impossible or unlawful knowledge is a great fault. Surely if men were better husbands of their time, what progress might they make! Their faith would not be so weak, nor their love of God so cold, nor such defects in every grace. Well, then, though diligence in inquiring after the truth be laudable, yet if be it polluted with the sin of curiosity, it is a fault and a great disorder.

2. It is that disorder which is called pride.

[1.] Its entrance into the world showeth it; for this is one of the things our first parents aspired unto. The fruit of the forbidden tree was good for knowledge, Gen. iii. 6. Man would know good and evil for himself, and be a god to himself, and would see all things in their own evidence, rather than upon divine revelation; he would know, and not believe. This is a bone that sticketh in many a throat, which he cannot digest and swallow; that there should be a sovereign lord, to dispose of him at his pleasure, and teach him, and provide for him. Certain it is that searching into things not revealed must of necessity be joined with some unthankfulness for things that are revealed; as if man by his own wit could find out more curious things, and more worthy our knowledge, than God was pleased to teach him. This was our first parents' sin, and this is nothing else but rank pride.

[2.] The formal nature showeth it; for the two branches of pride are in it—self-conceit and vainglory.

(1.) Self-conceit. It argueth too great a conceit of ourselves: Rom. xii. 16, 'Mind not high things: be not wise in your own conceits.'

(2.) For vainglory. We would set off ourselves as knowing more than others. We all affect the reputation of wisdom: Job xi. 12, 'Vain man would be counted wise, though he be born like the wild ass's colt.' Man is empty, but conceited of his perfection; will own a wickedness in morals rather than a weakness in intellectuals. Though we have not the reality of wisdom, yet we affect the reputation of wis-



dom. The pharisees took it tenderly to be accounted blind : ' Are we blind also ? ' John ix. 40.

[3.] It is a mischievous sort of pride.

(1.) It weakeneth our faith and belief of the mysteries of the gospel. There can be no sound believing till our proud imaginations and reasonings be captivated to the knowledge of God and obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 5. The corrupt nature of man is more prone to question the truth of God's word than to see and confess its own ignorance and incapacity. I say, men will suspect the scriptures rather than their own wit, and will still be reasoning, How can this be? and, How can that be?

(2.) It destroyeth our submission to God, and dependence upon his providence, when we are so foolishly conceited as to take upon us to judge of his works, and to reflect upon his infinite wisdom, goodness, and power; and we must prescribe to God, and model his dispensations, and censure them when they are not according to our mind. No; God will be known to be sovereign; all the creature's enjoyments are in his hand, to be disposed of according to his pleasure: Job ix. 10, ' He taketh away, and none can stay his hand, and say unto him, What doest thou? ' He is sovereign lord and proprietor. We are forced passively to submit, because we cannot help it; but we must actively submit. We must not quarrel and censure that which we cannot comprehend. God, having absolute dominion and sovereignty, is unaccountable to any: Job xxxiii. 13, ' Why dost thou strive with thy Maker, since he giveth no account of his matters? ' Before what tribunal will you cite him to answer? before the bar of your corrupted reason? God will not tie himself to those rules which men prescribe to him. You take too much upon you, exercise yourselves in matters too high for you, when you will judge of his providence.

(3.) It divideth the church by vain jangling about unnecessary things, and turneth all religion into a way of dispute; for this pride and presuming above our measure is that which breedeth contention. When the weak will guide all, and they will sit judges in matters of religion, and mould churches, even those who are scarce gotten into any sense of the first principles or knowledge in the way of God; when men presume beyond their skill, and confidently determine; hence come offences, grieving their guides, censuring their fellow-brethren, scandalising the world. O brethren! how much doth it deserve to be written over the doors of every place you meet, ' Be not wise in your own conceit. ' Much of the devil's work is done in the world by raw heady professors, who, having weak understandings and strong passions, will take upon them to rule all, till they undo all by their turbulency. And here is the mischief; the nature of this ignorance is to be ignorant of itself; as he that never saw the light knoweth not what it is. There is a good deal of knowledge necessary to make men know their ignorance; and therefore there is no way but to check the presumption as much as we can.

(4.) It hindereth serious godliness by an unprofitable misspence of time, and a needless distracting our thoughts, and a neglect of searching into things more necessary and useful for ourselves and others. The apostle telleth us, that ' he that doteth about questions is proud,

and neglecteth the doctrine which is according to godliness,' 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4.

*Use 1.* To press you to take heed of this sort of pride; not pressing into God's secrets, or going beyond our bounds, and the limits of our gifts and calling, or censuring his word and works.

1. Consider that it is the honour of God to hide a thing, that he may the more humble us. There are some truths in his word we know not the reasons of them; we must accept them upon his revelation. We will allow parents to conceal the reasons and ends of many precepts from their children; and princes have their *arcana imperii*, their mysteries of state. And why must you not allow this to God? Prov. xxv. 2, 'It is the glory of God to conceal a thing.' Especially in his providence. There is a veil upon his proceedings: 'What I do thou knowest not now; but hereafter thou shalt know,' saith Christ to Peter, John xiii. 7. God's name is written both upon his word and works, and therefore they have somewhat in them that is incomprehensible.

2. Many times the inconspicuousness of the reasons of providence is not from the object, but a defect in the faculty. Blind men think the sun is put out, when the web is upon their own eyes. Shall we presumptuously censure the word and works of God who are blind and hasty? Sometimes blinded by our passions and carnal prejudices; our judgment is perverted by an indulgence to sense and carnal affections; and while we examine God's providence by sense, we mistake it. Sometimes there may be order where we think is confusion, and beauty where we see nothing but rudeness, and love where we interpret hatred; when Christ died, when Joseph was sent to prison, &c. The first lines in a picture or statue have no beauty in them. Suspend your judgment till the work be brought to an end: 'Judge nothing before the time,' 1 Cor. iv. 5.

3. What a monstrous arrogancy it is in us to sit as judges of God's word and works, and presumptuously to pass censures upon them! This will appear if we consider either our baseness or the majesty of God.

[1.] Our baseness. We are but a handful of enlivened dust, poor worms that but lately started out of nothing, and shall soon be turned into dust again; and shall we take upon us, and have such an opinion, that we should know the secrets of the king of kings, and must have an account of all his dealings? As if every rustic should press into the cabinet of princes, and demand an account of all things they do in the administration of the kingdom. Will the eternal God bear it, that poor worms should inquire into all his secrets?

[2.] The majesty of God. It is a despising of his majesty, and a strange pride, to call our Maker to an account, and know of him the reason of all his works, or else we will not be satisfied. Can we dispute with God, or comprehend the counsels of God? 'His judgments are a great deep,' Ps. xxxvi. 16, 'And his ways past finding out,' Rom. xi. 33. Not according to our laws, but his own infinite wisdom. A cockleshell may as well contain the ocean as we fathom all the depths of God.

*Use 2.* In point of practice. We should not affect great things

in the world, or be unsatisfied with that degree and state of life wherein God hath placed us, and so aspire after greater. Now this is a token of humility.

1. It is God's express direction : 1 Tim. vi. 8, 'Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content;' and Heb. xiii. 5, 'Be content with such things as ye have.' There is a contentment in opposition to covetousness, and a contentment in opposition to pride. They both agree in this, that, have we more or have we less, if it be but bare food and raiment that we may live, and so live as that we have time to serve God, and seek his kingdom, and the salvation of our souls, we should be content. That is, in opposition to covetousness, we should not distract ourselves with distrustful cares and covetous desires, but with a quiet mind rely upon God's precious promises and merciful providence for support and necessaries. But then there is a contentment in opposition to pride, when we do not repine and murmur against God, but are content to be at his finding; accounting a little is enough by the way, and so we get heaven at last. It is no great matter how much or how little we enjoy by the way. If our condition be mean, we disdain it not; if higher, we desire to improve it for God. This the apostle practised : Phil. iv. 11, 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.' To rest satisfied with our present condition, without repining against God.

2. That is the best condition wherein God hath placed us, though it be never so low and mean. Partly because of God's sovereignty. Men must not arrogate to themselves the disposal of their own estate, because we are receivers and not prescribers : Job ii. 10, 'Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?' He appointeth to every one his portion. Therefore it is not what will please us, but what will please him. All the good we have cometh from God, and he must be left to dispose of it as he will. Partly because God is infinitely wise and better knoweth what is fittest for us than we do for ourselves. He knoweth our infirmity better than we do ourselves, what our shoulders will bear, and what not. Partly because of his goodness and kindness. He is no less kind and loving, nay, much more than we are to ourselves, and will not fail to give us anything that may be truly good for us. It is a mighty point in our dependence upon God to hate thoughts of God; and as it is a great help and relief to the soul, so it is easy to prove from his love in Christ : Rom. viii. 32, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' From his gracious covenant : Ps. xxxiv. 10, 'They that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing;' and Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'The Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Therefore, upon the whole, let God choose our portion for us.

3. Those great matters which the world crieth up for such are but small things in comparison of those things which christians should be most busied about. There are two sorts of great things—either in reality or in appearance.

[1.] The great things in reality are God, and Christ, and the law of grace, the promises of the pardon of sin and eternal life : Hosea viii. 12,

‘I have written to him the great things of my law.’ There are great things indeed discovered in the law of God, as a great God, a precious Saviour, a sanctifying Spirit, the way of salvation, and salvation itself; these are great things indeed: 2 Peter i. 4, ‘To us are given exceeding great and precious promises,’ τὰ μέλιστα ἐπαγγέλματα. They contain spiritual and eternal riches, and dear-bought blessings. Now in these great matters should we exercise ourselves. It is a low and base spirit that doth not seek these spiritual and heavenly things. But these suit not with carnal sense, because they are only valued and esteemed by faith.

[2.] Great things in appearance. Those are worldly things which in reality are the smallest matters, 2 Cor. vi. 2; but the flesh counteth them great, because of the suitability they carry to our fancies and appetites. Great affections make the things of the world seem great. They are only great in our own conceit: Prov. xviii. 11, ‘The rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.’ We promise ourselves much happiness in the enjoyment of these things, therefore our hearts run after them; but a christian hath higher matters to mind.

4. These things, the more they are sought after, our desires are greated with the enjoyment, and still we seek greater and greater things. Allow this disposition, and it will still carry us further; for the soul is never satisfied; Isa. v. 8, they are joining house to house, field to field; Eccles. v. 10, ‘He that loveth abundance shall not be satisfied with increase.’ The flesh is wise in its own matters; it aimeth at first only at those things which are within our grasp and reach; but then still it enlargeth itself, and would have more; and when that is obtained, we would fain be built a story higher in the world. In honour and greatness there is no end. Now it is better to stop at first, because, to be contented with what we have, and improve it to God’s glory, argueth the highest and noblest spirit: 1 Tim. vi. 6, ‘Godliness with contentment is great gain.’ A christian life with a competent subsistence is the best wealth in the world.

5. The danger of seeking after these great things. There is danger in the pursuit, danger in the enjoyment. In the pursuit: If our hearts be set upon these things, it is ten to one but that we will step out of the way to obtain them; for as he that will be rich falleth into a snare, so doth he that will be great, 1 Tim. vi. 9. Aspiring minds will get their preferment at any cost. What poor things do the ambitious stoop to to attain their ends! Humour the lusts and uncertain minds of men, writhe themselves into all postures, yea, too often wriggle themselves out of all good conscience and neglect of God, and trample upon what is sacred; all must go down that they may rise. But when, with all this ado, they have gotten up, there is danger in the enjoyment. An higher condition is more slippery and obnoxious to ruin. Mountain tops are tempestuous habitations, where men still live in the storms of envy and jealousy. Mounting hath cost many dear in this world; the higher they are, the fall the greater. But we should not be too keenly set on that which may endanger our everlasting welfare. In this state of corruption, it is hard to be high and not lifted up; and we have no reason to be in love with our temptations. A strong head

will run round on the pinnacle of a steeple; it is better and safer to stand on the ground. When we enjoy great things here in the world, it is hard to please men, and we find them the greatest hindrances of pleasing God; yea, few find that pleasure which they expected to themselves.

Secondly, That this affecting great things argueth pride.

1. Because affecting greater things argueth discontent with our present estate. Now that is clearly the daughter of pride and self-love which maketh us think ourselves worthy of much more than we have. That we are discontented appeareth partly by our unthankfulness to God for what we have received, undervaluing those blessings we enjoy as far beneath us: Mal. i. 2, 'I have loved you, saith the Lord; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?' And partly by our unquietness in our own hearts when our desires are not satisfied; as Ahab had not rest in himself when he could not get Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings xxi. 3, 4. And partly also by our envy and discontent with our neighbours who possess that which we desire to enjoy, and are consequently looked upon by us with an evil eye, as standing in the way of that we aim at: Esther v. 13, 'All this availeth me nothing as long as I see Mordecai in the king's gate.'

2. The very affectation of great things is that dangerous and baneful sin of pride; because the scripture commendeth to us a mean condition as most safe: Mat. v. 3, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.' The poor in spirit are those who are contented to be poor, if God will have it so; and those that have an heart suited to or reconcilable with a low condition, though they cannot flaunt it in the world as others do. So Prov. xvi. 19, 'Better it is to suffer with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.' Now our condition is to be valued by the judgment of God in his word rather than by our own carnal affections; partly because to keep much ado about our own greatness, and glory, and advancement, argueth a base temper of spirit: Prov. xxv. 27, 'For men to search their own glory is not glory.' Seeking, affecting these things, is a mark of indignity. Let us attract it by our deserving, not affect it by our ambition. It is the violet is found out by its own smell, though it be shrouded and covered by leaves; so should we be found out by our own worth. Where the matter is combustible, we need not blow so hard to keep in the fire. Such carking and caring for it argueth little worth. Partly because worldly honour or honour from men should be little valued by a christian, who is acquainted with a greater honour and glory that cometh from God: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one from another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?' A christian should be contented to be approved and respected of God, who hath made him his child and servant, and given him his favour and image. That should be our great ambition: 2 Cor. v. 9, 'We labour that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him,' *φιλοτιμούμεσθα*. The faith and belief of this cannot consist with the dominion of ambition or affectation of worldly glory. To hunt after respect from men, and receive it with lustful delight, or to rest in it as the chief scope of our actions, showeth that our faith is not sound. In being servants, or sons, or friends to God,

is such an honour of estate and privilege that all other honour should become vile in our eyes. They that attend upon God and depend upon him have a sweeter life than they that wait upon princes; all the honours of the world are but as a dream and child's game to the real glory. You are courtiers and family servants of the infinite sovereign of heaven and earth, and your heart is employed in loving him, your tongue in praising him, your life in serving him, and at length you shall enjoy him. Now if this be valued according to its worth, you will be so contented with this that the love of honour from men will be much weakened and deadened in you, so that you will not much regard how you are looked on by the world if you may have the approbation of God. Partly because if this affecting and seeking of great things in the world be allowed, affected, and indulged, you can never keep a good conscience, nor be thoroughly faithful to Christ. Men are under a temptation to unconscionable dealing, that they may purchase that by any means without which we think not ourselves supplied according to our worth; for ambition is like a whirlwind, that teareth all things in our way; and for favour and preferment men will break through all restraints of honesty and conscience; and Christ, and the gospel, and owning the truth, will be trampled upon to make up a step for their rising; when called to undergo an ignominious cross, or to practise those duties which are of no respect in the world; as John xii. 43, 'They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' On the contrary, where this disposition is checked or mortified, Acts v. 41, 'They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.'

3. I have one reason more; because our Lord appeared in an humble garb to teach us to slight the pomp and glory of the world: Mat. xx. 28, 'He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' Divines give this as a reason why Christ came in a poor condition, because if he had preached up heavenly-mindedness, self-denial, and mortification, and had himself lived in pomp and fulness, the people would not have regarded his words, as contrary to his practice. And doth not the same reason hold good of his followers? We profess heavenly-mindedness, mortification, and self-denial; and if we should affect and seek great things for ourselves here in the world, is there not a manifest contradiction between our profession and our practice? Therefore, out of all, we should be contented with a mean and low estate, and have a heart suited to it; which we can never have unless this natural affection to greatness be mortified; that is to say, unless we would concur that the suspicion of pride, dignity, and honour in the world should be less desired, more feared, and more cautiously used; and if any step before us, we should see very small cause to envy them.

*Use.* To press us to take heed of this seeking great things. Let us approve our present estate as every way best and fittest for us and God's honour and glory; limiting our desires, that we wish it not to be otherwise than it is; yea, bringing our affections to delight in it, as that which God hath laid out for us. And then, let me tell you, you have gotten a very great conquest; you have mortified the proud spirit, which is a notable point of grace.

To help you, take these considerations—

1. Whatever we enjoy is more than we have a title to by nature: Job i. 21, 'Naked came I into the world, and naked shall I return;' and 1 Tim. vi. 7, 'We brought nothing with us into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.' We came into the world contented with a cradle, and we must go out contented with a grave. This life is nothing but a coming into the world and a going out again; if, between both, God keep us low and bare, we want nothing that we can claim by original right. And within a short time we shall be stripped of all, though we had never so much. Death levels all, and maketh them equal.

2. We are unworthy of what we enjoy, and have it merely out of favour and free grace: Gen. xxxii. 10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant.' And if we be not worthy of what we have, should we murmur because we have no more? Surely then we think more is due to us; for it is a certain truth that whosoever do prescribe to God at what rate they will be maintained, do ascribe too much to themselves, and complain because men of their deserts are neglected in the world.

3. What we have we have no ability to manage as we ought, nor can we give an account of it if God should deal strictly with us. All talents must be accounted for: Luke xxi. 19, 'After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them.' And according to the greatness of our talents our account will be greater: Luke xii. 48, 'To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. And to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' You have talents enough to answer for. He that cannot bear a less burden, how will he bear a greater?

4. That maxim of our Lord striketh at the root of worldly affection: Luke xii. 15, 'Man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' Superfluity of wealth is not able to prolong life, or to make it more happy and comfortable to us. You can enjoy no more than you need and use, and you enjoy that by God's blessing; and therefore, without so much ado, man may live comfortably.

5. The opposite maxim, Ps. xxxvii. 16, 'A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.' Usually there is an emptiness and want of satisfaction in wealth that is ill-gotten. They have it, but it doeth them no good. They have neither the temporal nor the spiritual use, for the glory of God and the benefit of others; and within a while there is a visible curse and blast that attendeth it. The meanest pittance, well acquired and holily improved, is more contentedly enjoyed, and doth more good, than all those riches.

6. Remember the ends of this life, and wherefore it was given us; to glorify God and save our souls. Mind this thoroughly, and it will check aspiring projects.

[1.] To glorify God. You were not made for your own glory, but for his. Now God may be glorified though you be not exalted. It is more for our glory to shine in a glorious orb and sphere, but oftentimes not for God's. The mean glorify him as well as the honourable, and sometimes much more; the afflicted as well as the prosperous. He requireth no more of you than to finish the work he hath given you to do, John xvii. 4; and that may be in any state of life.

[2.] This life was given us to seek a better; and let the seeking of heavenly glory be your work and scope, and you will have a double advantage.

(1.) Worldly glory will be darkened and lessened in your eyes; for what is greatness here to that glory we expect as coming from God? Mat. xvi. 27.

(2.) You are entitled to God's protection and provision. Earth necessities are given us to preserve this life. All, besides food and raiment, is not necessary. Necessaries God will care for: 'He knoweth that we have need of these things,' Mat. vi. 32. They may comfortably expect it who first seek his kingdom; he hath bound himself to give them these things, Mat. vi. 33.

#### SERMON IV.

*Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child.*—Ps. cxxx. 2.

It is not enough to avoid pride, but we must study to excel in humility. The rooting out of sin is never thoroughly done till the heart be planted with the contrary grace. Of many it may be said that they are rather not vicious than virtuous. We may say of a sensual man that he is not proud, but we cannot say that he is humble.

In the former verse, he had told us of his avoiding pride; now he telleth us of his endeavours after humility. There, 'My heart is not haughty;' Here, 'My soul is even as a weaned child.' He declareth his humility by his quiet submission to God's providence.

This is here represented—

1. By a vehement asseveration, 'Verily.'
2. By a sincere endeavour, 'I have behaved and quieted myself.'
3. By an apt comparison, taken from a child that is 'weaned of his mother.'

And it is doubled and repeated for the greater emphasis, 'My soul,' &c.

I. Here is a vehement asseveration, 'Surely.' He is the more earnest in it, to remove the suspicion of ambition, which some were apt to impute to him, as if he sought to wrest the kingdom from Saul. Therefore he prefixeth this 'Surely' to show the truth of what he spoke. In the original it runneth in the form of an oath; Septuagint, *εὶ μὴ*. Such a form of speech as you have Ps. xc. 11, 'To whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.' Heb. marg., 'If they enter into my rest.' Half the speech is expressed, *verba mali ominis suppressenda sunt*, to teach us we should not use our mouths to imprecations; therefore that part is not mentioned. There is a horrible boldness in some men, who are ever and anon wishing great plagues and curses and damnation unto themselves, and interlarding their speech with these imprecations, as if it were a glory or a