

## THE ART OF SELF-HUMBLING.

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### SERMON II.

*Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me, &c.—2 CHRON. XXXIV. 27.*

OF tenderness of heart, the first inward cause in Josiah, which moved God to pity him, so as he should not be an eye-witness of the fearful calamities to come upon his land and people, is largely spoken in the former sermon; wherein is also shewed how it is wrought, preserved, discerned, recovered when it is lost; what encouragements we have to seek and labour for it, with some other things which I will not here repeat, but fall directly upon that which follows, 'And thou didst humble thyself before God.' In which words we have set down the second inward cause in Josiah, that moved God to shew mercy unto him; the humbling of himself. 'And thou didst humble thyself before God.' Tenderness of heart and humbling a man's self go both together; for things that are hard will not yield nor bow. A great iron bar will not bow, a hard stony heart will not yield. Now, therefore, humbling of ourselves, the making of us as low as the ground itself, is added unto tenderness; for the soul being once tender and melting, is fit to be humbled, yea, cares not how low it be abased, so mercy may follow. For the better unfolding of the words, we will consider,

1. *The person that did humble himself:* 'Josiah,' a king, a great man.
2. *Humiliation itself, and the qualities of it:* 'and humbledst thyself before God,' which argued the sincerity of it.
3. *The occasion of it:* 'when thou heardest the words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof.'
4. *The outward expression of it, in weeping and rending his clothes;* which we will handle in their place.

1. First, for the *person*, 'Thou didst humble thyself,' Josiah a king, who was tenderly brought up, and highly advanced; a thing which makes the work so much the more commendable; whence we learn,

*Doct. 1. That it is a disposition not unbefitting kings to humble themselves before God.* For howsoever they are gods downward, to those that are under

them, yet if they look upward, what are kings? The greater light hides the lesser. What are all the inhabitants of the earth in his sight, but as a drop of a bucket, as dust upon the balance, of no moment! Isa. xl. 15. 'I have said you are gods, but you shall die like men,' Ps. lxxxiii. 6, 7. For howsoever the saints of God differ from other men in regard of their use, and the inscription God hath set upon them, yet they are of the same stuff, dust, as others are. And so kings, though in civil respects they differ from other men, yet are they of the same metal, and shall end in death, all their glory must lie in the dust.

Therefore it is not unbefitting kings to humble themselves before God, seeing they have to deal with him who is a 'consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29, before whom the very angels cover their faces. I say it is no shame for the greatest monarch of the earth to abase himself when he hath to do with God; yea, kings, of all other persons, ought most to humble themselves, to shew their thankfulness to God, who hath raised them from their brethren to be heads of his people. And considering the endowments which kings usually have, they are bound to humble themselves, as also in regard of the authority and power which God hath put into their hands, saying, 'By me kings reign,' Prov. viii. 15. But usually we see, from the beginning of the world, that kings forget God. Where there is not grace above nature, there kings will not stoop to Christ; but so far as it agrees with their pleasure and will, so far shall Christ be served, and no farther.

But yet God hath always raised up some nursing fathers and mothers,—as he hath done to us, for which we ought to bless God,—who have and do make conscience of this mentioned duty, so well beseeeming Christian princes, as in sundry other respects, so also in this, that therein they might be exemplary to the people. For no doubt but Josiah did this also, that his people might not think it a shame for them to humble themselves before God, whenas he their king, tender in years, and subject to no earthly man, did before them, in his own person, prostrate himself in the humblest manner before the great God of heaven and earth.

As that ointment poured upon Aaron's head fell from his head to the skirts, and so spread itself to the rest of the parts, even to his feet, Ps. cxxxiii. 2, so a good example in a king descends down to the lowest subjects, as the rain from the mountains into the valleys. Therefore a king should first begin to humble himself. Kings are called fathers to their subjects, because they should bear a loving and holy affection to their people, that when anything troubles the subjects, they should be affected with it. Governors are not to have a distinct good from their subjects, but the welfare of the subjects should be the glory of their head. Therefore Josiah took the judgments threatened as his own: howsoever his estate was nothing unto theirs.

It is said moreover, 'Thou didst humble thyself.' He was both the agent and the patient, the worker and the object of his work: it came from him, and ended in him. Humiliation is a reflected action: Josiah humbled himself. And certainly this is that true humiliation, the humbling of ourselves; for it is no thanks for a man to be humbled by God, as Pharaoh was; for God can humble and pull down the proudest that do oppose his church. God by this gets himself glory. But here is the glory of a Christian, that he hath got grace from God to humble himself; which humbling is, from our own judgment, and upon discerning of good grounds, to bring our affections to stoop unto God; to humble ourselves. Many are humbled that are not humble; many are cast down that have

proud hearts still, as Pharaoh had. It is said, 'Thou humbledst thyself.' Then we learn,

*Doct. 2. That the actions of grace are reflected actions.* They begin from a man's self, and end in a man's self; yet we must not exclude the Spirit of God; for he doth not say, thou from thyself didst humble thyself, but 'thou didst humble thyself.' We have grace from God to humble ourselves. So that the Spirit of God doth work upon us as upon fit subjects, in which grace doth work. Though such works be the works of God, yet they are said to be ours, because God doth work them in us and by us. We are said to humble ourselves, because we are temples wherein he works, seeing he useth the parts of our soul, as the understanding, the will, and the affections, in the work. Therefore it is foolish for the papists to say, good works be our own, as from ourselves. No; good works, say we, are ours, as effects of the Spirit in us. But for the further expression of this humbling of ourselves before God, we will consider,

1. The kinds and degrees of it.
2. Some directions how we may humble ourselves.
3. The motives to move us to it.
4. The notes whereby it may be known.

1. First, for the *nature and kinds of it*; we must know that humiliation is either

- (1.) *Inward, in the mind* first of all, and then in the *affections*; or,
- (2.) *Outward, in expression of words*, and likewise in *carriage*.

(1.) To begin with the first *inward humiliation in the mind*, in regard of judgment and knowledge, is, *when our understandings are convinced, that we are as we are*: when we are not high-minded, but when we judge meanly and basely of ourselves, both in regard of our beginning and dependency upon God, having all from him, both life, motion, and being; and also in regard of our end, what we shall be ere long. All glory shall end in the dust, all honour in the grave, and all riches in poverty. And withal, true humiliation is also in regard of spiritual respects, when we judge aright how base and vile we are in regard of our natural corruption, that we are by nature not only guilty of Adam's sin, but that we have, besides that, wrapt ourselves in a thousand more guilts by our sinful course of life, and that we have nothing of our own, no, not power to do the least good thing. When we look upon any vile person, we may see our own image. So that if God had not been gracious unto us, we should have been as bad as they. In a word, inward conviction of our natural frailty and misery, in regard of the filthy and foul stain of sin in our nature and actions, and of the many guilts of spiritual and temporal plagues in this life and that which is to come, is that inward humiliation in the judgment or understanding.

Again, Inward humiliation, besides spiritual conviction, is *when there are affections of humiliation*. And what be those? Shame, sorrow, fear, and such like penal afflictive affections. For, upon a right conviction of the understanding, the soul comes to be stricken with shame that we are in such a case as we are; especially when we consider God's goodness to us, and our dealing with him. This will breed shame and abasement, as it did in Daniel. Shame and sorrow ever follow sin, first or last, as the apostle demands, Rom. vi. 21, 'What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?' After conviction of judgment there is always shame; and likewise there is sorrow and grief. For God hath made the inward faculties of the soul so, that upon the apprehension of the understanding, the heart comes to be stricken through with grief, which works

upon our souls. Therefore we are said in Scripture to afflict ourselves ; that is, when we set ourselves upon meditation of our deserts. Hereupon we cannot but be affected inwardly, for these sorrows are so many daggers to pierce through the heart.

The third penal affection is, *fear and trembling before God's judgments and his threatenings*, a fear of the majesty of God, whom we have offended, which is able to send us to hell if his mercies were not beyond our deserts. But his mercy it is, that we are not consumed. A fear of this great God is a part of this inward humiliation. So we see what inward humiliation is : first, a conviction of the judgment ; and then it proceeds to inward afflictive affections, as grief, shame, fear, which, when upon good ground and fit objects, they are wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, they are parts of inward humiliation. But as for the wicked, they drown themselves in their profaneness, because they would not be ashamed, nor fear, nor grieve for them. But this makes way for terrible shame, sorrow, and fear afterwards ; for those that will not shame, grieve, and fear here, shall be ashamed before God and his angels at the day of judgment, and shall be tormented in hell for ever.

2. Secondly, His *outward humiliation* is expressed and manifested in words, in outward behaviour and carriage. The words which he used are not here set down ; but certainly Josiah did speak words when he humbled himself. It was not a dumb show, but done with his outward expression and his inward affection. This is evident by those words of the text, 'I have heard thee also,' saith the Lord. Without doubt, therefore, he did speak something. But because true sorrow cannot speak distinctly,—for a broken soul can speak but broken words,—therefore his words are not here set down, but yet God heard them well enough. And indeed, so it is sometimes, that the grief for the affliction may be stronger than the faculty of speech, so that a man cannot speak for grief. As a heathen man, by light of nature, did weep and grieve for his friends, but when his child came to be killed before him, he stood like a stone, because his sorrow was so great that it exceeded all expression. So humiliation may so exceed that it cannot be expressed in words ; as David himself, when he was told of his sins by Nathan, did not express all his sorrow, but saith, 'I have sinned ;' yet afterwards, he makes the 51st Psalm, a composed speech for supply, a fit pattern for an humble and broken soul. So doubtless there was outward expression of words in Josiah, although they be not here set down. This speech, which is a part of humiliation, is called a confession of our sins to God ; with it should be joined hatred and grief afflictive, as also a deprecation and desire that God would remove the judgment which we have deserved by our sins ; and likewise a justification of God, in what he hath laid or may lay upon us. Lord, thou art righteous and just in all thy judgments ; shame and confusion belongeth unto me ; my sins have deserved that thou shouldest pour down thy vengeance upon me ; it is thy great mercy that I am not consumed. The good thief upon the cross justified God, saying, 'We are here justly for our deserts ; but this man doth suffer wrongfully,' Luke xxiii. 41. Justification and self-condemnation go with humiliation. This is the outward expression in words. Now the outward humiliation in respect of his carriage, is here directly set down in two acts :

1. Rending of clothes. And 2. Weeping.

But of these I shall speak afterwards when I come at them. Thus we have seen the degrees and kinds of humiliation.

Seeing it is such a necessary qualification, for humiliation is a funda-

mental grace that gives strength to all other graces ; seeing, I say, it is such a necessary temper of a holy gracious man to be humble ; how may we come to humble ourselves as we should do ? I answer, Let us take these directions :

1. First, *Get poor spirits*, that is, spirits to see the wants in ourselves and in the creature ; the emptiness of all earthly things without God's favour ; the insufficiency of ourselves and of the creature at the day of judgment ; for what the wise man saith of riches may be truly said of all other things under the sun : they avail not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivereth from death, Prov. xi. 4.

Josiah was not poor in respect of the world, for he was a king ; but he was ' poor in spirit,' because he saw an emptiness in himself. He knew his kindgom could not shield him from God's judgment, if he were once angry.

(1.) Let us consider *our original*. From whence came we ? From the earth, from nothing. Whither go we ? To the earth, to nothing. And in respect of spiritual things, we have nothing. We are not able to do anything of ourselves, no, not so much as to think a good thought.

(2.) Likewise, consider we *the guilt of our sins*. What do we deserve ? Hell and damnation, to have our portion with hypocrites in that ' lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.'

(3.) Let us have before our eyes the picture of old Adam, our sinful nature : how we are drawn away by every object ; how ready to be proud of anything ; how unable to resist the least sin ; how ready to be cast down under every affliction ; that we cannot rejoice in any blessing ; that we have no strength of ourselves to perform any good or suffer ill ; in a word, how that we carry a nature about us indisposed to good, and prone to all evil. This consideration humbled Paul, and made him to cry out, when no other afflictions could move him, ' O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death ?' Rom. vii. 24. By this means we come to be poor in spirit.

2. If we would have humble spirits, let us *bring ourselves into the presence of the great God*: set ourselves in his presence, and consider of his attributes, his works of justice abroad in the world, and open\* ourselves in particular.

Consider his wisdom, holiness, power, and strength, with our own. It will make us abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes. Let us bring ourselves into God's presence, be under the means, under his word, that there we may see ourselves ripped up, and see what we are. As Job, when he brought himself into God's presence, said, ' I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes,' Job xlii. 6. Job thought himself somebody before ; but when God comes to examine him, and upon examination found that he could not give a reason of the creature, much less of the Lord's, afflicting his children, then he saith, ' I abhor myself.' So Abraham, the more he talked with God, the more he did see himself but dust and ashes. This is the language of the holy men in Scripture, when they have to deal or think of God. ' I am not worthy,' says John Baptist, John i. 27. So Paul : ' I am not worthy to be called an apostle,' 1 Cor. xv. 9. So the centurion : ' I am not worthy thou shouldst come into my house,' Mat. viii. 8. ' I am less than the least of thy blessings,' saith Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. Thus let us come into the presence of God, under the means of his word, and then we shall see our own vileness, which will work humiliation ; for, as the apostle saith, when a poor simple man doth come, and hears the pro-

\* Qu. ' upon' ?—ED.

phesy, that is, the word of God, with application unto himself, laying open his particular sins, doubtless he will say, God is in you, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

3. That we may humble ourselves, *let us be content to hear of our sins and baseness by others.* Let us be content that others should acquaint us with anything that may humble us. Proud men are the devil's pipes, and flatterers the musicians to blow these pipes. Therefore it is, that though men have nothing of their own, yet they love to give heed to flatterers, to blow their bladder full, which do rob them of themselves; whereas a true, wise man, will be content to hear of anything that may humble him before God.

4. And withal, that we may humble ourselves, *look to the time to come, what we shall be ere long,* earth and dust; and at the day of judgment we must be stripped of all. What should puff us up in this world? All our glory shall end in shame, all magnificency in confusion, all riches in poverty. It is a strange thing that the devil should raise men to be proud of that which they have not of their own, but of such things which they have borrowed and begged; as for men to be proud of themselves in regard of their parents. So, many there are who think the better of themselves for their apparel, when yet they are clothed with nothing of their own, and so are proud of the very creature. But thus the devil hath besotted our nature, to make us glory in that which should abase us, and to think the better of ourselves, for that which is none of our own. Nay, many in the church of God, are so far from humbling themselves, that they come to manifest their pride, to shew themselves, to see and to be seen. Thus the devil besots many thousand silly creatures, that come in vainglory into the house of God; that whereas they should humble themselves before him, they are puffed up with a base empty pride, even before God. Therefore let us take notice of our wonderful proneness to have a conceit of ourselves; for if a man have a new fashion, or some new thing, which nobody else knows besides himself, how wonderful conceited will he be of himself! Let us take notice, I say, of our proneness to this sin of pride; for the best are prone to it. Consider, it is a wonderful hateful sin, a sin of sins, that God most hates. It was this sin that made him thrust Adam out of paradise. It was this sin which made him thrust the evil angels out of heaven, who shall never come there again. Yea, it is a sin that God cures with other sins, so far he hateth it; as Paul, being subject to be proud through the abundance of revelations, was cured of it by a prick in the flesh: being exercised with some dangerous, noisome, and strange cure. Indeed, it is profitable for some men to fall, that so by their humiliation for infirmities, they may be cured of this great, this sacrilegious sin.\* And why is it called a sacrilegious sin? Because it robs God of his glory. For God hath said, 'My glory I will not give to another,' Isa. xlii. 8. Is not the grace, goodness, and mercy of God sufficient for us, but we must enter into his prerogatives, and exalt ourselves? We are both idols and idol-worshippers, when we think highly of ourselves, for we make ourselves idols. Now God hates idolatry; but pride is a sacrilege, therefore God hates pride.

5. If we would humble ourselves, *let us set before us the example of our blessed Saviour;* for we must be conformable to him, by whom we hope to be saved. He left heaven, took our base nature, and humbled himself to the death of the cross, yea, to the washing of his disciples' feet, and among the rest, washed Judas's feet, and so suffered himself to be killed as a traitor, Philip. ii. 5-7; and all this to satisfy the wrath of God for us, and

\* Cf. Augustine in references and quotations of note *γ*, Vol. III. p. 531.—G.

that he might be a pattern for us to be like-minded. Therefore, if we would humble ourselves by pattern, here is a pattern without all exception. Let us be transformed into the likeness of him; yea, the more we think of him, the more we shall be humbled. For it is impossible for a man to dwell upon this meditation of Christ in humility, and with faith to apply it to himself, that he is his particular Saviour, but this faith will abase the heart, and bring it to be like Christ in all spiritual representation. A heart that believeth in Christ will be humbled like Christ. It will be turned from all fleshly conceit of excellency, to be like him. Is it possible, if a man consider he is to be saved by an abased and humble Saviour, that was pliable to every base service, that had not a house to hide himself; I say, is it possible that he which considers of this, should ever be willingly or wilfully proud? Do we hope to be saved by Christ, and will we not be like him? When we were firebrands of hell, he humbled himself to the death of the cross, left heaven and happiness a-while, and took our shame, to be a pattern to us. We know that Christ was brought into the world by a humble virgin. So the heart wherein he dwells must be an humble heart. If we have true faith in Christ, it will cast us down, and make us to be humbled. For it is impossible that a man should have faith to challenge any part in Christ, except he be conformed to the image of Christ in humility. Therefore let us take counsel of Christ: 'Learn of me, for I am humble and meek; and so you shall find rest to your souls,' Mat. xi. 29.

Lastly, That we may humble ourselves, *let us work upon our own souls by reasoning, discoursing, and speaking to our own hearts.* For the soul hath a faculty to work upon itself. Now this, being a reflected action, to humble ourselves, it must be done by some inward action; and what is that? To discourse thus: If so be a prince should but frown upon me when I have offended his law, in what case should I be! Yet, when the great God of heaven threatens, what an atheistical unbelieving heart have I, that can be moved at the threatenings of a mortal man, that is but dust and ashes, and yet cannot be moved with the threatenings of the great God! Consider also, if a man had been so kind and bountiful to me, if I should reward his kindness with unkindness, I should have been ashamed, and have covered my face with shame; and yet how unkind have I been unto God, that hath been so kind to me, and yet I never a whit ashamed! If a friend should have come to me, and I have given him no entertainment, what a shame were this! But yet how often hath the Holy Ghost knocked at the door of my heart, and suggested many holy motions into me of mortification, repentance, and newness of life, yet notwithstanding I have given him the repulse, opposed the outward means of grace, and have thought myself unworthy of it; what a shame is this!

Thus, if we compare our carriage in earthly things with our carriage in heavenly, this will be a means to work upon our hearts, inwardly to humble ourselves. Thus was David abased; for when Nathan came and told him of a rich man, who having many sheep, spared his own and took away a poor man's, which was all that he had; when David considered that he had so dealt with Uriah, he was dejected and ashamed of his own courses. Let us labour to work our hearts to humility, into true sorrow, shame, true fear, that so we may have God to pity and respect us, who only doth regard a humble soul. Thus we have seen some directions how we may come to humble ourselves.

Further, There is an order, method, and agreement in these reflected actions, when we turn the edge of our own souls upon ourselves and

examine ourselves ; for the way that leads to rest is by the examination of ourselves. We must examine ourselves strictly, and then bring ourselves before God, judge and condemn ourselves ; for humiliation is a kind of execution. Examination leads to all the rest. So, then, this is the order of our actions ; there is examination of ourselves strictly before God, then indicting ourselves, after that comes judging of ourselves.

Oh that we could be brought to these inward reflected actions, to examine indict, judge, and condemn ourselves, that so we might spare God a labour, and so all things might go well with us !

3. Now I come to the third thing I propounded, *the motives to move us to get this humiliation.*

(1.) First, *Let us consider of the gracious promises that are made to this disposition of humbling ourselves ;* as Isa. lvii. 15, 'For thus saith he that is holy and excellent, he that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is the Holy One ; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to give life to them that are of a contrite heart.' So there is a promise that God will give grace to the humble. An example of mercy in this kind we have in Manasseh, who, though a very wicked man, yet because he humbled himself, obtained mercy. Peter humbled himself, and David humbled himself, and both found mercy. And so likewise Josiah ; yea, and in James iv. 10, we are bid to 'humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and he will exalt us in due time.' There is the promise. Yea, every branch of humiliation hath a promise. As confession of sins, if we confess and forsake our sins, we shall have mercy and find pardon. So those that judge themselves shall not be judged.

A humble heart is a vessel of all graces. It is a grace itself, and a vessel of grace. It doth better the soul and make it holy, for the soul is never fitter for God than when it is humbled. It is a fundamental grace that gives strength to all other graces. So much humility, so much grace. For according to the measure of humiliation is the measure of other grace, because a humble heart hath in it a spiritual emptiness. Humility emptieth the heart for God to fill it. If the heart be emptied of temporal things, then it must needs be filled with spiritual things ; for nature abhorreth emptiness ; grace much more. When the heart is made low, there is a spiritual emptiness, and what fills this up but the Spirit of God ? In that measure we empty ourselves, in that measure we are filled with the fulness of God. When a man is humbled, he is fit for all good ; but when he is proud, he is fit for all ill, and beats back all good. God hath but two heavens to dwell in ; the heaven of heavens, and the heart of a poor humble man. The proud swelling heart, that is full of ambition, high conceits, and self-dependence, will not endure to have God to enter ; but he dwells largely and easily in the heart of an humble man. If we will dwell in heaven hereafter, let us humble ourselves now. The rich in themselves are sent 'empty away ;' the humble soul is a rich soul, rich in God ; and therefore God regards the lowly and resists the proud. As all the water that is upon the hills runs into the valleys, so all grace goes to the humble. 'The mountains of Gilboa are accursed,' 2 Sam. i. 21. So there is a curse upon pride, because it will not yield to God.

(2.) Again, *All outward actions benefit other men ; but this inward action of humbling a man's self makes the soul itself good.*

(3.) *An humble soul is a secure and safe soul ; for a man that is not high, but of a low stature, needs not to fear falling. A humble soul is a safe*



soul ;—safe in regard of outward troubles ; for when we have humbled ourselves, God needs not follow us with any other judgment : safe, in regard of inward vexation or any trouble by God ; for when the soul hath brought itself low, and laid itself level as the ground, then God ceaseth to afflict it. Will the ploughman plough when he hath broken up the ground enough ? or doth he delight in breaking up the ground ? See what Isaiah saith to this purpose in chap. xxviii. 28. When God seeth that a man hath abased himself, he will not follow with any other judgment ; such a one may say to God, Lord, I have kept court in mine own conscience already, I have humbled and judged myself, therefore do not thou judge me ; I am ready to do whatsoever thou wilt, and to suffer what thou wilt have me. I have deserved worse a thousand times, but, Lord, remember I am but dust and ashes. Thus God spares his labour when the soul hath humbled itself. But if we do not do this ourselves, God will take us in hand ; for God will have but one God. Now if we will be gods, to exalt ourselves, he must take us in hand to humble us, either first or last. And is it not better for us to humble ourselves than for God to give us up to the merciless rage and fury of men, for them to humble us, or to fall into the hands of God, who is a ‘ consuming fire ’ ? For when we accuse and judge ourselves, we prevent much shame and sorrow. What is the reason God hath given us up to shame and crosses in this world, but because we have not humbled ourselves ? What is the reason many are damned in hell ? Because God hath given them reason, judgment, and affections, but they have not used them for themselves, to examine their ways, whether they were in the state of condemnation or salvation. They never used their affections and judgment to this end, therefore God was forced to take them in hand. Well saith Austin, all men must be humbled one way or other ; either we must humble ourselves or God will ;\* if we will do this ourselves, the apostle promiseth, we shall not be judged of the Lord, 1 Cor. xi. 31. But we do not these things as we should, because it is a secret action. We love to do things that the world may take notice of, but this inward humiliation can only be seen by God, and by our own consciences. Let these motives therefore stir us up to humble ourselves, for humbled we must be by one way or other. How many judgments might be avoided by humbling ourselves ! How many scandals might be prevented if we would judge ourselves ! What is the reason so many Christians fall into scandalous sins, whereby, provoking God’s anger, they fall into the hands of their enemies, but because they spare themselves, and think this humbling themselves a troublesome action. Therefore to spare themselves, they run on. Because they would not work this upon themselves, they grow to be in a desperate state at last. Wherefore upon any occasion be humble, let us prepare ourselves to meet the Lord our God. When we hear but any noise of the judgments of God, we should humble ourselves, as good Josiah did ; when he did but hear of the threatenings against his land, it made him humble himself.

*Quest.* But here it may be demanded, considering that wicked men do oftentimes humble themselves, being convinced in their consciences, and thereupon ashamed,

4. *How may we know holy from hypocritical humiliation ?* which is the last thing I propounded concerning humiliation, namely, the notes and marks whereby we may know true humiliation from false, which are these.

*Ans.* 1. First, *Holy humiliation is voluntary ;* for it is a reflected action,

\* In ‘ Confessions ’ repeatedly.—G.

which comes from a man's self. It ends where it begins. Therefore Josiah is said to humble himself. But, on the contrary, the humiliation of other men is against their will. False humiliation is not voluntary, but by force it is extorted from them. God is fain to break, crush, and deal hardly with them, which they grieve and murmur at. But the children of God have the Spirit of God, which is a free Spirit, that sets their hearts at liberty. For God's Spirit is a working Spirit, that works upon their hearts, and hereby they willingly humble themselves, whereas the wicked, wanting this Spirit of God, cannot humble themselves willingly, but are cast down against their wills. For God can pluck down the proudest. He can break Pharaoh's courage, who, though he was humbled, yet he did not humble himself. A man may be humbled, and yet not humble. But the children of God are to humble themselves, not that the grace whereby we humble ourselves is from ourselves; but we are said to humble ourselves, when God doth rule the parts he hath given us, when he sets our wits and understanding on work to see our misery, and then our will and affection to work upon these. Thus we are said to humble ourselves when God works in us. An hypocrite God may humble and work by him. He may work by graceless persons, but he doth not work in them. But God's children have God's Spirit in them, not only working in\* them his own works, as he doth by hypocrites and sinful persons, but his Spirit works in them. So that here is the main difference between true humiliation and that which is counterfeit. The one is voluntary, being a reflected action, to work upon and to humble ourselves; but the other is a forced humiliation.

2. Again, *True humiliation is ever joined with reformation.* Humble thyself and walk with thy God, saith the prophet: Micah vi. 8, 'He hath shewed thee, O man, what he doth require of thee, to humble thyself, and walk with thy God.' Now the humiliation of wicked men is never joined with reformation. There is no walking with God. Josiah reformed himself and his people to outward obedience, as much as he could, but he had not their hearts at command.

3. Again, *Sin must appear bitter to the soul,* else we shall never be truly humbled for it. There is in every renewed soul a secret hatred and loathing of evil, which manifests the soundness both of true humiliation and reformation, and is expressed in three things.

(1.) In a serious purpose and resolution not to offend God in the least kind. The drunkard must purpose to leave his drunkenness, and the swearer resolve between God and his own heart, to forsake his base courses, and cry mightily herein for help from above.

(2.) Secondly, There must be a constant endeavour to avoid the occasions and allurements of sin. Thus Job made a covenant with his eyes, that 'he would not look upon a maid,' Job xxxi. 1; and thus every unclean and filthy person should make a covenant with themselves against the sins which they are most addicted unto. When they came to serve God, in Hosea, then 'away with idols,' Hosea. xiv 8. So must we, when we look heavenward, cast from us all our sins whatsoever.

(3.) Thirdly, There must be a hatred and loathing of sin in our confessions. We must confess it with all the circumstances, the time when, and place where. We must aggravate our offences, as David did: 'Against thee have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight;' Ps. li. 4; and as the apostle: 'I was a blasphemer, I was a persecutor,' I was thus and thus. He did

\* Qu. 'by'?—ED.

not extenuate his sin, and say, the rulers commanded me so to do; but, 'I persecuted the church' out of the wickedness of mine own heart. A true Christian will not hide his sins, but lay them open, the more to abase himself before God. This aggravating of our sins will make them more vile unto us, and us more humble in the sight of them. True reformation of life is ever joined with an indignation of all sin, there is such a contrariety in the nature of a child of God against all evil.

[1.]\* We should therefore first *hate sin universally*; not one sin, but every kind of sin, and that most of all which most rules in us, and which is most prevalent in our own hearts. A sincere Christian hates sin in himself most. We must not hate that in another which we cherish in ourselves.

[2.] We should *hate sin the more, the nearer it comes to us*, in our children and friends, or any other way. It was David's fault to let Absalom his son go unproved in his wicked practices, and Eli for not correcting his sons. We see what came of it, even their utter overthrow.

[3.] He that truly hates sin *will not think much to be admonished and reproved when he errs*. A man that hath a bad plant in his ground, that will eat out the heart of it, will not hate another that shall discover such an evil to him; so if any one shall reprove thee for this or that sin, and thou hate him for it, it is a sign corruption is sweet to thee.

Only this caution must be remembered, reproof must not be given with a proud spirit, but in a loving, mild manner, with desire of doing good. There is a great deal of self-love in some men, who, instead of hating sin in themselves and others, approve and countenance it, especially in great men, flattering them in their base humours, and fearing lest by telling them the truth they should be esteemed their enemies.

[4.] Our hatred of sin may be discerned *by our willingness to talk of it*. He that hates a snake, or toad, will flee from it; so a man that truly abhors sin, will not endure to come near the occasions of it. What shall we say then of those that prostitute themselves to all sinful delights? As hatred of sin is in our affection, so it will appear in our actions. Those that love to see sin acted did never as yet truly loathe it.

It is a sign that we do not hate sin when we take not to heart the sins of our land. 'Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell in the tents of Kedar,' saith David; 'mine eyes gush out with tears because men keep not thy law,' Ps. cxx. 5. Lot's soul was vexed at the unclean conversation of the wicked, 2 Peter ii. 7. But, alas! how do we come short of this! The greatest number are so far from mourning for the abominations of the land, that they rather set themselves against God in a most disobedient manner, and press others to sin against him. Are magistrates of David's mind, to labour to cut off all workers of iniquity from the land? Indeed, for small trifling things they will do a man justice, but where is the tenderness of God's glory? Where are those that seek to reform idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, and profaneness amongst us? Pity it is to see how many do hold the stirrup to the devil, by giving occasions and encouragements to others to commit evil. Do we hate sin, when we are like tinder, ready to receive the least motion to it, as our fashion-mongers, who transform themselves into every effeminate unbecoming guise? Shall we say that these men hate sin, which, when they are reprov'd for it, labour to defend it or excuse it, counting their pride but comeliness, their miserable covetousness but thirst,† and drunkenness only good fellowship?

\* In margin here, 'Signs of a true hatred of sin.'—G. † Qu. 'thrift'?—ED.

To strengthen our indignation against sin the better, consider,

1. *The ugliness thereof*, how opposite and distasteful it is to the Almighty, as appears in Sodom and in the old world. It is that for which God himself hates his own creature, and for which he will say to the wicked at the day of judgment, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,' Mat. xxv. 41. Sin is the cause of all those diseases and crosses that befall the sons of men. It hath its rise from the devil, who is the father of it, and whose lusts we do whensoever we offend God.

There is not the least sin but it is committed against an infinite majesty, yea, against a good God, to whom we owe ourselves and all that we have, who waits when you will turn to him and live for ever; but if you despise his goodness, and continue still to provoke the eyes of his glory, is a terrible and revengeful\* God, and ready every moment to destroy both body and soul in hell.

Sin is the bane of all comfort. That which we love more than our souls undoes us. It embitters every comfort, and makes that we cannot perform duties with spiritual life. Our very prayers are abominable to God so long as we live in known sin. What makes the hour of death and the day of judgment terrible but this?

2. Again, *Grow in the love of God*. The more we delight in him, the more we shall hate whatsoever is contrary to him. In that proportion that we affect God and his truth we will abhor every evil way, for these go together. Ye that love the Lord, hate the thing that is ill. The nearer we draw to him, the farther we are separated from everything below.

3. And to strengthen our indignation against sin, we should *drive our affections another way, and set them upon the right object*. A Christian should consider, Wherefore did God give me this affection of love? Was it to set it on this or that lust, or any sinful course? Or hath he given me this affection of hatred that I should envy my brethren, and condemn the good way? No, surely. I ought to improve every faculty of my soul to the glory of the giver, by loving that which he loves, and hating that which he hates. God's truth, his ways, and children, are objects worthy our love, and Satan with his deeds of darkness the fittest subjects of our indignation and hatred.

4. Fourthly, *True humiliation proceeds from faith*, and is in the faithful not only when judgment is upon them, but before the judgment comes, which they foreseeing by faith, do humble themselves. True humiliation quakes at the threatenings, for the very frowns of a father will terrify a dutiful child. As Josiah, when he did but hear of the threatenings against the land, he humbled himself in dust and ashes. 'He rent his clothes.' So true humiliation doth quake at the foresight of judgment, but the wicked never humble themselves but when the judgment is upon them. Carnal people are like men that, hearing thunder-claps afar off, are never a whit moved; but when it is present over their heads, then they tremble. So hypocrites care not for judgments afar off; as now when the church of God is in misery abroad we bless ourselves, and think all is well. It is no thanks for a man to be humbled when the judgment is upon him, for so Pharaoh was, who yet, when the judgment was off, then he goes to his old bias again.

Let us try our humiliation by these signs, whether we can willingly humble ourselves privately before God, and call ourselves to a reckoning; whether we add reformation of life to outward humiliation, when our heart

\* That is, = 'avenging.'—G.

doth tell us that we live in such and such sins ; whether our hearts tremble at the threatenings, when we hear of judgments public or private. What is the ground that may deceive themselves ? They say, if any judgment come upon them, then they will repent, and cry to God for mercy ; and why should I deny myself of my pleasures of sin before ? Oh, this is but a forced humiliation, not from love to God, but love to thyself. It is not free, therefore thou mayest go to hell with it. Others defer off their repentance till it be too late. When they have any sickness upon them they will cry to God for mercy. This is but Ahab's and Pharaoh's humiliation. It is not out of any love to God, but merely forced. It is too late to do it when God hath seized upon us by any judgment. Do it when he doth threaten, and now he hath seized upon the parts of the church abroad already ; therefore now meet thy God by repentance.

5. A fifth difference between true humiliation and false is, that *with true humiliation is joined hope*, to raise up our souls with some comfort, else it is a desperation, not a humiliation. The devils do chafe, vex, and fret themselves, in regard of their desperate estate, because they have no hope. If there be no hope, it is impossible there should be true and sound humiliation ; but true humiliation doth carry us to God, that what we have taken out of ourselves by humiliation, we may recover it in God. Therefore humility is such a grace, that though it make us nothing in ourselves, yet doth it carry us to God, who is all in all. Humiliation works between God and ourselves, and makes the heart leave itself, to plant and pitch itself upon God, and looks for comfort and assurance from him. And where there is not this there is no true humiliation. There is nothing more profitable in the world than humility, because, though it seem to have nothing, yet it carrieth the soul to him that fills all in all. Hence it is, that there is an abasing of ourselves for anything that we have done amiss, from love to God and love to his people, but yet it is joined with hope. We know God to be a gracious God unto us, and therefore we humble ourselves, and are grieved for offending of him.

6. A sixth difference between true humiliation and false is this, *That hypocrites are sorrowful for the judgment that is upon them ; but not for that which is the cause of the judgment*, which is sin ; but the child of God, he is humbled for sin, which is the cause of all judgments. As good Josiah, when he heard read out of Deuteronomy the curses threatened for sin, and comparing the sins of his people with the sins against which the curses were threatened, he humbled himself for his sin and the sins of his people. For God's children know, if there were no iniquity in them, there should no adversity hurt them ; and therefore they run to the cause, and are humbled for that. Whereas the wicked, they humble themselves only because of the smart and trouble which they do endure.

7. The last difference between true humiliation and false is this, *that true humiliation is a thorough humiliation*. Therefore it is twice repeated in this verse, 'thou didst humble thyself before God ;' when thou heardest the words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, 'and humbledst thyself before me.' It is twice repeated in this verse, and afterward expressed by 'rending of clothes,' and 'tears.' It was thorough humiliation. For he dwelt upon the humbling of his own soul. So that the children of God thoroughly humble themselves, but the hypocrite, when he doth humble himself, it is not thoroughly. They count it a light matter. As soon as the judgment is off, they have forgotten their humiliation, as Pharaoh did. Many will heave a few sighs, and hang down the head like

a bulrush for a time ; but it is, like Ephraim's morning dew, quickly gone. They have no sound and thorough humiliation. It is but a mere offer of humiliation. Whereas the children of God, when they begin, they never cease working upon their own hearts with meditation, until they have brought their heart to a blessed temper, as we see in David, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel, how they did humble themselves.

But why do God's children take pains in humbling themselves ?

Partly because it must be done to purpose, else God will not accept it ; and partly because there is a great deal of hardness and pride in the best, and much ado before a man can be brought for to humble himself. Therefore we must labour for this. We see what ado there was before Job could be brought to humble himself. Yet Job must be humbled before there comes ' one of a thousand ' to comfort him, as Job xxxiii. 23. If a man be once thoroughly and truly humbled, he shall soon have comfort. By these marks we may know true humiliation from an humiliation counterfeit.

*Quest.* But here may arise another question, How may we know when we are humbled enough, or when we are grieved enough ?

*Ans.* To this I answer, 1. That *there is not the same measure of humiliation required in all.* For those whom God did pick out for some great work, he doth more humble them than others, as he did Moses and Paul before he wrought the great work of converting the Gentiles. So David, before he came to be king, was a long time humbled.

2. Again, *There are others that have been greater sinners, and more openly wicked in their courses than others,* and in them a greater measure of humiliation is required.

3. Again, *There are others that are more tenderly brought up from childhood,* who have often renewed their repentance. These need not to be humbled so much as others ; for humiliation should be proportionable unto the sinful estate of the soul ; which because it differs in divers men, in like manner their humiliation ought to differ. But to answer the question more directly, we are said to be humbled enough,

1. First, *When we have wrought our souls to a hearty grief that we have offended God,* when we have a perfect and inward hatred of all sin, and when thou dost shew the truth of thy grief by leaving off thy sinful courses. So that, dost thou hate and leave thy sinful course ? Then thou art sufficiently humbled. Go away with peace and comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee. Therefore it is not a slight humiliation that will serve the turn, but our hearts must be wrought unto a perfect hatred and leaving of all sins ; for if this be not, we are not sufficiently humbled as yet. And when we find ourselves to hate and leave sin in some measure, then fasten our souls by faith, as much as may be, upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. For the soul hath two eyes, the one to look upon itself and our vileness, to humble us the more ; the other, to fasten upon the mercy of God in Christ, to raise up our souls. For if the whole soul were fastened upon its own misery and vileness, then there could not be that humiliation which ought to be, neither could we serve God with such cheerfulness ; therefore we must have our souls raised up to God's mercy. Now let us labour for the first, because the devil is so main an enemy unto it ; for he knows well enough, that so much as we are humble and go out of ourselves to God, and rest upon him, so much we stand impregnable against his temptations, that he cannot prevail against us ; and so much as we do not trust in God, but upon the creature, so much must we lie open to his snares.

Therefore all his temptations tend to draw us to trust in the creature, to have a conceit of ourselves, and to draw our hearts from relying upon God. His first plot is always to make us rest in ourselves. Therefore let us labour to go out of ourselves, to see a vanity in ourselves, and a happiness in God, that so going out of ourselves, and relying upon God and his mercies, we may stand safe against Satan's temptations.

*Use.* This should teach us to *take heed of such affections as tend directly contrary to humiliation*; for how can it be but that those should be proud, that hold the doctrine of the Church of Rome, as, first, that we have no original sin in us, but it is taken away by baptism; that we are able to fulfil the law fully in this life. This is presumptuous. Whereas Paul cries out after baptism, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!' Rom. vii. 24. Nay, they can do more, namely, works of supererogation, whereby they merit heaven. How do these blow up the heart of man, and make it swell with pride! This must needs make men very proud, to think that a man can merit by works. With such blasphemous opinions they have infected the world, and led captive millions of souls into hell. Therefore let this be a rule of discerning true religion; for surely that is true religion which doth make us go out of ourselves; that takes away all from ourselves and gives all the glory to God; which makes us to plead for salvation by the mercy of God through the merits of Christ. But our religion doth teach us thus. Therefore it is the true religion, and will yield us sound comfort at the last. Thus much for inward humiliation, the humbling of ourselves, as Josiah did.