

## **Chapter Twelve: HUMILITY AND EXALTATION.... "Do what God says is your work and humble yourself. Trust Him to do what He says is His work..."**

***"He that humbles himself shall be exalted. "Luke 14:11, 18:14.***

***"God giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He shall exalt you." Jas. 4:10.***

***"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. "1 Pet.5:6.***

Just yesterday I was asked the question, How am I to conquer this pride? The answer was simple. Two things are needed. Do what God says is your work and humble yourself. Trust Him to do what He says is His work: He will exalt you. The command is clear, humble yourself. That does not mean that it is your work to conquer and cast out the pride of your nature, and to form within yourself the lowliness of the holy Jesus. No, this is God's work; the very essence of that exaltation, wherein He lifts you up into the real likeness of the beloved Son. What the command does mean is this: take every opportunity of humbling yourself before God and man. In the faith of the grace that is already working in you, stand. In the assurance of the more grace for victory that is coming, stand. Up to the light that conscience each time flashes upon the pride of the heart and its workings, stand. Notwithstanding all there may be of failure and falling, stand persistently as under The unchanging command: humble yourself. Accept with gratitude everything that God allows from within or without, from friend or enemy, in nature or in grace, to remind you of your need of humbling, and to help you to it. Reckon humility to be indeed the mother-virtue, your very first duty before God, the one perpetual safeguard of the soul. Set your heart upon it as the source of all blessing. The promise is divine and sure: He that humbles himself shall be exalted. See that you do the one thing God asks: humble yourself. God will see that does the one thing He has promised. He will give more grace and He will exalt you in due time.

All God's dealings with man are characterized by two stages. First is the time of preparation. This is when command and promise, with the mingled experience of effort and impotence, of failure and partial success, with the holy expectancy of something better which these waken, train and discipline men for a higher stage. Then comes the time of fulfillment, when faith inherits the promise, and enjoys what it had so often struggled for in vain. This law holds good in every part of the Christian life, and in the pursuit of every separate virtue. And that because it is grounded in the very nature of things. In all that concerns our redemption, God must take the initiative. When that has been done, man's turn comes. In the effort after obedience and attainment, he must learn to know his impotence. In self-despair he must die to himself, and so be fitted voluntarily and intelligently to receive from God the goal, the completion of that of which he had accepted the beginning in ignorance. So, God who had been the Beginning, before man rightly knew Him, or fully understood what His purpose was, is longed for and welcomed as the Goal, as the All in All. It is even thus, too, in the pursuit of humility. To every Christian the command comes from the throne of God Himself: humble yourself. The earnest attempt to listen and obey will be rewarded; yes, but rewarded with the painful discovery of two things. The one, what depth of pride, that is of unwillingness to count oneself and to be counted nothing, to submit absolutely to God, there was, that one never knew. The other, what utter impotence there is in all our efforts, and in all our prayers too for God's help, to destroy the hideous monster. Blessed is the man who now learns to put his hope in God, and to persevere, notwithstanding all the power of pride within him, in acts of humility before God and Men. We know the law of human nature: acts produce habits, habits breed dispositions, dispositions form the will, and the rightly-formed will is character. It is not different in the work of grace. Acts persistently repeated beget habits and dispositions, and these strengthened the will. He who works both to will and to do comes with His mighty power and Spirit. The humbling of the proud heart with which the penitent saint cast himself so often before God, is rewarded with the "more grace" of the humble heart. In this humble heart the Spirit of Jesus has conquered, and brought the new nature to its maturity, and He, the meek and lowly One, now dwells there for ever.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will exalt you. And wherein does the exaltation consist? The highest glory of the creature is in being only a vessel, to receive and enjoy and show forth the glory of God. It can do this only as it is willing to be nothing in itself, that God may be all. Water always fills first the lowest places. The lower, the emptier a man lies before God, the speedier and the

fuller will be the inflow of the divine glory. The exaltation God promises is not, cannot be, any external thing apart from Himself. All that He has to give or can give is only more of Himself, Himself to take more complete possession. The exaltation is not, like an earthly prize, something arbitrary. It is connected with the conduct to be rewarded, humility. It is in its very nature the effect and result of the humbling of ourselves. It is nothing but the gift of such a divine indwelling humility, such a conformity to and possession of the humility of the Lamb of God, as fits us for receiving fully the indwelling of God.

He that humbles himself shall be exalted. Of the truth of these words Jesus Himself is the proof. Of the certainty of their fulfillment to us, He is the pledge. Let us take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart. If we are but willing to stoop to Him, as He has stooped to us, He will yet stoop to each one of us again, and we shall find ourselves not unequally yoked with Him. As we enter deeper into the fellowship of His humbleness, and either humble ourselves or bear the humbling of men, we can count upon it that the Spirit of His exaltation, "the Spirit of God and of glory," will rest upon us. The presence and the power of the glorified Christ will come to them that are of an humble spirit. When God can again have His rightful place in us, He will lift us up. Make His glory your care in humbling yourself; He will make your glory His care in perfecting your humility, and breathing into you, as your abiding life, the very Spirit of His Son. As the all-pervading life of God possesses you, there will be nothing so natural, and nothing so sweet, as to be nothing, with not a thought or wish for self, because all is occupied with Him who fills all. "Most gladly will I glory in my weakness, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me." Brother, have we not here the reason that our consecration and our faith have availed so little in the pursuit of holiness? It was by self and its strength that the work was done under the name of faith. It was for self and its happiness that God was called in. It was, unconsciously, but still truly, in self and its holiness that the soul rejoiced. We never knew that humility, absolute, abiding, Christ like humility and self-effacement, pervading and marking our whole life with God and man, was the most essential element of the life of the holiness we sought for. It is only in the possession of God that I lose myself. As it is in the height and breadth and glory of the sunshine that the littleness of the mote playing in its beams is seen. Even so humility is the taking our place in God's presence to be nothing but a mote dwelling in the sunlight of His love.

"How great is God!  
How small am I!  
Lost, swallowed up in Love's immensity!  
God only there, not I."

May God teach us to believe that to be humble, to be nothing in His presence, is the highest attainment, and the fullest blessing of the Christian life. He speaks to us: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit." Be this our portion!

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

#### **--Note D--**

*A Secret of Secrets: Humility the Soul of True Prayer.--Till the spirit of the heart be renewed, till it is emptied of all earthly desires, and stands in an habitual hunger and thirst after God, which is the true spirit of prayer; till then, all our prayer will be, more or less, but too much like lessons given to scholars; and we shall mostly say them, only because we dare not neglect them. But be not discouraged; take the following advice, and then you may go to church without any danger of mere lip-labor or hypocrisy, although there should be a hymn or a prayer, whose language is higher than that of your heart. Do this: go to the church as the publican went to the temple; stand inwardly in the spirit of your mind in that form which he outwardly expressed, when he cast down his eyes, and could only say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Stand unchangeably, at least in your desire, in this form or state of heart; it will sanctify every*

*petition that comes out of your mouth; and when anything is read or sung or prayed, that is more exalted than your heart is, if you make this an occasion of further sinking down in the spirit of the publican, you will then be helped, and highly blessed, by those prayers and praises which seem only to belong to a heart better than yours.*

*This, my friend, is a secret of secrets; it will help you to reap where you have not sown, and be a continual source of grace in your soul; for everything that inwardly stirs in you, or outwardly happens to you, becomes a real good to you, if it finds or excites in you this humble state of mind. For nothing is in vain, or without profit to the humble soul; it stands always in a state of divine growth; everything that falls upon it is like a dew of heaven to it. Shut up yourself, therefore, in this form of Humility; all good is enclosed in it; it is a water of heaven, that turns the fire of the fallen soul into the meekness of the divine life, and creates that oil, out of which the love to God and man gets its flame. Be enclosed, therefore, always in it; let it be as a garment wherewith you are always covered, and a girdle with which you are girt; breathe nothing but in and from its spirit; see nothing but with its eyes; hear nothing but with its ears. And then, whether you are in the church or out of the church, hearing the praises of God or receiving wrongs from men and the world, all will be edification, and everything will help forward your growth in the life of God.*