

FAMILY SERMON.

LUKE CH. I. VERSES 52 & 53.

"He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

"He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away."

The beautiful hymn of thanksgiving from which these words are selected was pronounced by the mother of our Lord upon a most interesting occasion. In this exquisite song of praise, after expressing her faith in the assurances vouchsafed to her by the Almighty through his holy messenger the angel Gabriel, and declaring her gratitude for the high honour and dignity conferred upon her, she celebrates in beautiful inspired language the mercy and goodness of God in his care of his faithful servants and the fulfilment of his promise to his chosen people. The sublime sentiments of this hymn offer valuable instruction to ourselves; among other lessons, it teaches us that the Almighty "scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts; that he puts down the mighty from their seats, while he exalts the humble and meek," and that while "the-rich are sent empty away" with respect to spiritual grace, "those that hunger and thirst after righteousness" are "filled with the good things" of his word. May the contemplation of this divine subject teach us to be "clothed with humility" since God in all his precepts and dispensations "resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble."

Previous to the Christian dispensation the virtue of humility was unknown in the world. The heathen philosophers considered it as a vice and had no words to express its meaning but baseness of mind. The Jews had no idea of it in their intercourse with other nations, nor indeed amongst themselves—Vain and selfish in their dispositions they despised all who were not of their own community as utterly unworthy of the divine protection and regard. "We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man" was their language to our Saviour himself. Boasting assertion! when they were at the very moment under a foreign yoke. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" was the observation of the woman of Samaria; wondering at his very great condescension as a Jew, to ask drink of her, who belonged to a people whom they so much despised and abhorred.

Our blessed Lord therefore from his first entering upon his ministry took every opportunity of inculcating the virtue of humility. At the very outset of his public instructions he marked at once, in the strongest and most decided terms, the peculiar temper, spirit