

and character of his religion, manifesting to his disciples how completely opposite they were to those qualities which had always been the great objects of admiration to the heathen world. In the beginning of his admirable sermon on the Mount he says, "blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the peace makers." Upon another occasion, when his disciples, who being possessed with the imagination which prevailed universally among the Jews that the Messiah's kingdom was to be a temporal one, desired to know who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, our Lord took a method of teaching them humility and directing them to condescension that might strike their minds in a forcible manner. "He called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them and said, Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" that is unless a total change took place in the temper and disposition of their minds, unless they became as unambitious, as meek and as humble, as little concerned about worldly honours and distinctions, as a little child, they could never be considered as true subjects of Christ's kingdom here, or capable of inheriting the kingdom of heaven hereafter. In the eye of God humility is a sublime virtue, and "whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." It was by humility that they were to rise to dignity in his kingdom "for he that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The design of our Saviour was to destroy and eradicate those principles of ambition and pride with which even his own select disciples were so strongly tinctured. The inward temper of our souls was the object he had in view. He was desirous of subduing those tyrannical and overbearing passions which were so inimical to the progress and advancement of his kingdom, and to substitute in their place the more pleasing ones of humility and lowliness of mind. It should be our endeavour to restrain all unreasonable thoughts of honour and ambition, and to limit our desires of dignity and pre-eminence within proper bounds. By such a conduct as this only, it is that we can attain to that happy composure of mind which was so clearly represented by this figurative and emblematic action.

From the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican the advantages of humility are strikingly manifest. The proud and imperious Pharisee having a high opinion of and trusting in his own righteousness thus pompously exhibits his merits to the Almighty as if to demand as a debt the reward of his actions, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the Publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast and said, God, be merciful to me a sinner." The confession and