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Mr. Norris's
Practical Treatise Concerning Humility.

By John Norris, Rector of Bemerton near Sarum.

TO THE READER.

THE great, and at this time but too seasonable Importance of this Subject, and the exceeding little that has been professedly written upon it, make it very necessary to be consider'd. It were only to be wish'd that it had fallen into better Hands, that one of greater Intellectual Abilities, and that had more Health and Leisure to employ them, had undertaken it, that with those Advantages it might have had at length that Justice done it, which A 3 might
To the READER.

might have made some amends for its having been hitherto so much neglected.

However, according to my poor Abilities, and as little favourable Circumstances and Opportunities, I have endeavour'd something upon it, and that in such a manner, (whatever other Ornemental Accomplishments may be wanting) as I conceiv'd would become a Christian Discourse, such as I hope this will be found to be. I have taken some Pains to make it so, and such as it is, I commend it to the Serious and Candid Perusal of the Reader, who I hope, will accept of my good Will and well meant End.
To the READER.

I deavour to serve him, though I should not answer his Expectations, or satisfy his Desires upon a Subject, which though Practical, is not the most easy of any in the World to write well upon.

That I pretend not to do, but I was willing to be as serviceable as I could to the Interest of Christian Piety, which I cannot but think would be as well serv'd by a Professed Treatise of Humility, as by any thing which can be done in the way of Writing. In which undertaking, tho' Mr. Allen and Dr. Pelling have been before-hand with me, yet I suppose they have not so ex-hausted
To the READER.

hausted the Subject, but that there may be room enough for me, if I were capable of filling it. How far I may agree with either of those Authors in any of my Thoughts upon this Occasion, I know not, (having not seen Mr. Allen's Book these many Years, and the other never as I know of) nor do I think it material to inquire. Only perhaps it may be convenient upon another account, that the Reader should peruse these Books with this, since 'tis not unlikely that they may supply some Omissions in me, as I also possibly may in them; so that between us all, he may not be unfurnished of a competent Consideration of the matter in hand.
To the Reader.

I heartily wish that mine were such, and that it were now in my Power to present thee with a good Book. However, I am sure that I here offer thee a Book upon a good Subject, and such wherein every Reader is sure to be concern'd. And because he is so, I have had regard to all sorts of Readers in the Composition of it, hoping that to some of them it may do good. May Almighty God (to whom I humbly offer this Labour of mine for the good of his Church) accompany it with his Grace and Blessing to the Spiritual Advantage and Edification of all Christian People, and to the Glory of his great Name.
To the READER.

Here I thought to have ended, but before I do so, I have one Remark to add, relating to a Passage in the ensuing Treatise concerning Grace. Not the Thing, but the Name, which (Page the 163. of this Book) I suppose besides Favour, Kindness or good Will, to signify also the assisting Influence of the Holy Spirit inclining us to good; whereby I would not be understood to exclude the other Sense, (since even those inward assisting Influences are at the same time also free favours) but only to enlarge and extend the Signification of the word farther, so as with favour, which I allow to be the more strict and primary sense.
To the READER.

sense of it, to include and connote the effects of that favour, whereof those Assistencies are some of the chief, and as such therefore fit to be comprehended; as often as the Scope and Exigence of the place will comport with that Sense. Which seems very reasonable even upon the Supposition of the very Learned Person refer'd to P. 164 of this Book. For if the Grace of God, notwithstanding that in the more strict and primary sense it imports only Favour, be yet allowed not only to signify Favour abstractly and at large, but also to signify concretely, so as to take in some of the principal Effects of that Favour, or certain special Favours.
To the READER.

vours as we usually speak, such as the Mercy of God in the Pardon of Sin, and also the Charismata, or Miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit, why it may not also be allowed to signify those inward Operations of the same Spirit which help our Infirmities in the practice of our Christian Duty, (which in the popular use of the word, is also what we call Grace) I should be glad to see a good Reason, those inward Assistencies being though not so extraordinary, yet really the greater Favours of the two. Even as much greater as Charity is more excellent than those Charismata, or Spiritual Gifts, as the Apostle positively assures us that.
To the READER.

it is. And since he does so, it would, in my Opinion, seem somewhat strange, if that Operation of the Holy Ghost which works this Charity in us, or as the Apostle expresses it, that sheds the Love of God abroad in our Hearts, should not be allowed to be comprehended among the other significations of Grace, at least in the New Testament. But this with Submission to better Judgments.
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P. 132. l. 7. for is, r. in. P. 153. l. 25. r. does. P. 155. l. 6. r. deference. P. 156. l. 27. r. Pudicitia. P. 216. l. 27. r. effectual. P. 268. l. 2. r. deference. P. 278. l. 12. r. hollow. P. 362. l. l. r. Pedegree. P. 365. l. 8. r. Example. P. 395. l. 3. Note, that the words in Psalm 18, though in the Print, refer'd to Psalms, was by me refer'd to St. Austin upon that Psalm. P. 408. l. 26. and 27. For leaves, r. leave.

And for Commands, r. Command.

These are the chief Errata, besides a few false Pointings which I leave to the Notice and Correction of the Reader, as the Sense shall direct him.
A Practical Treatise concerning Humility.

Chap. I.

An Account of the Nature of Humility, shewing what we are properly to understand by it.

1. Though the Happiness of Heaven be Annexed to our doing the Will of God upon Earth, and not to the bare knowing of it, according to that of our Blessed Lord to his Disciples, If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them, John 13. 17. Yet since as Practice is the end of Knowledge, so Knowledge is the means to Practice, and we cannot so perfectly do our Duty, unless we first...
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First rightly understand it; it will be necessary for every Man that intends the performance of his Duty, to take care that he be first rightly Inform’d in the nature of it, and as the Apostle Exhorts, that he be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is, Ephes. 5. 17. And therefore, since Humility is a part, and a very Fundamental part of that Will, ’tis the concern of every Christian rightly to understand what it is, and what it requires, and to have a clear Notion of it settled in his Mind, not so much for the Notion’s sake (though that be not to be despised in a Creature whose Character and Distinction is Reason) as for the better direction of his Practice in a Vertue of so great Excellence and Importance. This therefore is what I shall first endeavour to give an Account of.

2. By Humility is I think generally understood a low or mean Opinion of our selves, and of our own Perfections and Endowments, whether Intellectual or Moral, whether Natural or Acquired. When a Man is cheap and vile in his own Eyes, is not High-minded, but thinks meanly of himself, to which perhaps some would add, and is content that others should do so too. For there is a double view of Humility given us by a Reverend Author, according to the Two Vices to which he considers it as Opposed, Pride.
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Pride and Vain-glory. To Pride, as it signifies a mean Opinion of our selves, and to Vain-glory as it signifies a Contendedness with being thought meanly of by others. This Humility, says he, is of two sorts: the First is the having a mean and low Opinion of our selves; the Second is the being content that others should have so of us. The first of these is contrary to Pride, the other to Vain-glory. Now it is true indeed, that this Contendedness is opposed to that Vice which we call Vain-glory; but how it comes under the Formal Notion of Humility, so as to make a specialty of that general, or how Humility itself can be opposed to two Vices which are not to it in the Relation of Excess and Defect (the only Case wherein any Vertue can stand opposed to two Vices) I find it easier to Inquire than to Comprehend. It seems a clearer way of proceeding, to consider this Contendedness of being meanly thought of by others, rather as the Effect of Humility, even as its contrary Vain-glory is of Pride, than as a sort of it; and accordingly so I shall consider it in the Sequel of this Treatise. As also to consider Humility itself as opposed only to Pride, and not to Vain-glory, and accordingly so I shall Apply my self to consider it. And since thus consider'd, it is generally made to consist in a Sense of our own Meanness and Unworthiness,

nefs, or low Opinion of our selves, I shall there leave it where the Judgment of the World has placed it, not designing to give any new Notion of Humility, but only so to state, limit and explain, that which is commonly receiv'd, that we may in some measure rightly understand what we are all so highly concern'd to Practice.

3. In the First place then, when it is said that Humility consists in a low Opinion of our selves, I suppose we are not to understand this in a Primary and Immediate, but in a Mediate and Secondary, or if you will, not in a Direct, but in a Consequential Sense; that is, that it obliges us to have a low Opinion of our selves, not directly, but as that is the consequence of something else, to which it does directly oblige us. For the Radical Notion of Humility, and that which is Original in it, and of the first Conception of it, I take to be this, to think truly and justly of our selves, to think of our selves as we ought to think, to think of our selves as we are, neither higher nor lower, neither better nor worse. For there may be a Fault on that side too, though there be not so much Danger of it, nor so much Mischief likely to arise from it; and the proper Business of Humility is to hold the Balance even between the Extreams, and so to adjust the matter, that there may be no Ex-
travagance on either side. Which Notion of Humility I ground on those words of St. Paul, *This I say through the Grace gi- ven to me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of Faith*, Rom. 12. 3. Wherein Humility is Described, First, Negatively, by a Man’s not thinking of himself more highly than he ought; that is, by not thinking too well of himself, or setting too great a value upon himself, which is the very thing we call Pride. Secondly, Positively, by thinking Soberly; that is, Justly and Truly, or with due Temper. Then we have here the Rule and Standard of this Sobriety in thinking of our selves, which we may come up to, but must not exceed, and that is the Truth and Reality of our Endowments, according as God has dealt to every Man the measure of Faith. By which it may seem, that Humility is a sort of Temperance, and so indeed it is, and so the Apostle here calls it, with whom it is ἁγνὸς καὶ ὑπάρχων, to think Soberly or Temperately. It is a Temperance of Opinion in reference to our selves, and our own worth, and as all other parts of Temperance are, is founded upon Justice, and is doing Justice to our selves as well as to all the World, as consisting in a due and just Sense
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and Estimation of our selves. Whence we may gather by the way how difficult a Virtue Humility is, it being one of the hardest things in the World for a Man rightly to know and understand himself. For which Reason, as well as for the great Influence it has upon the Conduct of our Manners, the knowledge of our selves has been so much Inculcated as the general Principle of Morality. But Humility is more particularly concern'd in it, concerning which, that which I am now observing, is, that the Primary and Radical Notion of it, is to have a true and just Sense of our selves, to think of our selves as we truly are. But then because we indeed are Mean, Vile, and Low, especially in this present state of corrupt Nature, and consequently cannot think of our selves truly and as we really are, unless we think Meanly of our selves; hence it is that we are obliged so to think, because otherwise we cannot think truly. And so Humility comes by this Means to Import a Base and a Low Opinion of our selves, and is generally so represented both by Human and Divine Writers: And accordingly is express'd in Scripture by Poverty of Spirit, Lowliness of Heart and Mind, &c.

4. Again Secondly, when Humility is made to consist in a low Sense and Opinion of our selves, I suppose, that by our think-
A Treatise concerning Humility.

Being lowly and meanly of our selves is to be understood our doing so, not always in respect of this or that particular Excellency or Endowment, but upon the whole. For it may be that we really have those particular Excellencies; and if we have them, why may we not think we have them? Indeed if we have them not, then 'tis Folly as well as Vanity to think that we have them. We deceive our selves, and make our selves Ridiculous and Contemptible to others. And therefore Humility does oblige us to such a low Opinion of our selves, as not to think that we have those Excellencies which we have not. For if a Man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself, as the Apostle tells us, Gal. 6. 3. But if we really have them, to think that we have them, is not to deceive our selves, but to think rightly so far; and what harm there should be in that, or what vertue in the contrary, is equally hard to conceive. For certainly, Humility is no Enemy to Truth, or a right Understanding, but the best Temper for it; and therefore says the Wise Man, with the Lowly is Wisdom, Prov. 11. 2. Nor can it oblige us to be mistaken in the Judgment that we pass upon our selves, any more than in other things or persons. Nor is it after all to be conceived, what Vertue or Excellence there should be in Ignorance.

B 4
or Mistake (especially as to our selves, whom of all things we are chiefly concern'd to understand) that they should be thought worthy to be Ingredients in the Constitution of one of the best and noblest Vertues; which is neither like to derive any Credit from such an Original or Alliance. Indeed thinking thus truly of our selves will in some sense (sometimes a Limited, and sometimes a Comparative Sense) be to think Highly: But what then, if thinking thus Highly, we at the same time think truly? I confess, it might in some Cases perhaps be more safe if Men were ignorant of their own worth, and their Light did not reflect home, it being not convenient for weak heads to see the height of their Station; but whatever the Danger may sometimes be, there can be no actual fault or moral disorder in thinking the Truth, in thinking our selves to be what we are. And if we are considerably Wise or Better than others (what Caution soever may be thought necessary to be used before we think so, that we may not be betrayed by the imposing partiality of Self-love) I see no harm in thinking so, any more than in thinking our selves to be Taller or Bigger than those whom we visibly exceed in Stature or Bulk.

5. And indeed, in many Cases, one can as little be avoided as the other. Light is very apt to strike the Eyes, and as I cannot well
well be ignorant of any shining Vertue or Accomplishment in myself, so neither can I be an utter Stranger to the Comparative value of it. I cannot but think myself to be Wiser than a Fool or Changeling, and better it may be than a loose Rake or professed Debauche. Nor is it any great Commendation that a Man would bestow upon himself by such a Character. But if it were, that does not necessarily make such an Opinion of ones self unlawful, however it may make the Publication of it Imprudent. For if a Man at Fifty, may think himself Wiser than he was at Five and Twenty, as having read more, thought more, and had more Experience; why may he not for the like Reasons think the same of himself in relation to other Men, who stand in the same proportion to him, that he now does to his former self? There is no doubt but that a well studied Divine may have a just right to think that he understands Divinity better than one of the Farmers of his Parish; a Master may think he knows more than his Scholar, or else why does he pretend to Teach him; and any one that professes any Art or Science, to the study of which he has Applied, perhaps Devoted himself, may warrantably think that he understands it better than one who never bestowed any time or thought in it, though otherwise of good Understanding. Nay
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Nay, in some Cases it will be necessary that he should; for if a Physician does not think he has a Competent Knowledge in his Profession, nay, that he understands it better than he who has not made it his Study, he is unfaithful to his Trust, and I do not see how he can practice with a good Conscience.

6. Besides, if a Man may not be allowed to be in any degree sensible of his own worth, and to think he has those Perfections which he has, how shall he be in a Capacity to thank God for them; or how shall he think himself obliged to make a due Improvement of those Talents which he has received: And therefore says St. Paul, I thank my God, I speak with Tongues more than you all, 1 Cor. 14. 18. Not that a Man ought to be forward to proclaim his Excellencies, or to declare any good Opinion he has of himself but upon reasonable and weighty Occasions, of which more hereafter in its proper place; but such an Opinion he may have Salvi Humilitate, without any violation of Humility, which does not oblige us to such a low sense of our selves, as not to think our selves possess'd of those particular Vertues which we really have. For that would be as much (though not so dangerously) to deceive our selves, as if we should think our selves possess'd of those which we have not. But there is no necessity of putting a Cheat upon our
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our selves either way, though it be much easier to deceive our selves by fancying an Imaginary, than by not perceiving a real Excellency. No, we cannot well avoid seeing it; and if we do see it, we cannot but set a just value upon it, (I do not say upon our selves for it) the same that we would set upon the same Perfection in another Man; there being no reason why an Excellency should be the less valuable for being in ones self.

7. Much less does Humility oblige us to descend to Low, as to esteem our selves either the Meanest or the Worst of Men, the Off-couring or Refuse of all things, the greatest Fools, or the greatest Sinners in the World. Nor can that high strain of Self-Abasement used by St. Paul, out of a deep sense of his own Unworthiness, of whom I am Chief, 1 Tim. 1. 15. with any Reason as to the thing, or equity of Interpretation, be applied to this purpose. For St. Paul could not think himself the greatest of Sinners; it being manifestly a much greater Crime to Betray Christ, than to Persecute his Church. Which St. Paul did not do neither out of Malice, but Ignorantly and in Unbelief, as he himself tells us, ver. 13. in this same Chapter. And therefore when he calls himself the Chief of Sinners, there is no need of understanding any more by it than one of the Chief. But indeed
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Indeed there is a place which seems with more colour of Intention, to make this a part of that lowliness of Mind which Humility requires of us, and that is, that of the same Apostle to the Philippians, In lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves, Phil. 2. 3. which by consequence is to think our selves to be the worst of all. But 'tis plain that this refers not to Judgment (for then there could be no such thing as a good Conscience) but to Practice and outward Deportment. And so Dr. Ham mond Explains it, That ye do nothing out of Opposition and Contention one against another, nothing Ambitiously or Ostentatiously; but all things on the contrary with that Quietness and Humbleness, as if ye had every one a better Opinion of the other's Wisdom and Piety than his own. Not but that there may be so much of Judgment in it too, as when we are not intimately well acquainted with others, to judge in favour of them against our selves, as not knowing but that they may have some Perfection or other Preferable to that wherein we exceed them. But still as Charity does not put out our Eyes as to other Mens Visible Faults, so neither does Humility as to our own Excellencies.

8. And indeed if it did, where would be the Vertue of it? If a Man does not see those Excellencies which he has, what Com-
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mendation is there not to be Proud of them? A Man indeed may be Proud (and nothing more common) of such Excellencies as he really has not; but then it must be upon a Supposition that he has them. For Pride is not so a Castle in the Air, as to have no Foundation at all to rest upon. It must have a Real or an Imaginary one; a Man cannot be Proud of an Absolute Nothing. And what he does not see, and knows nothing of, is to him no better than such. But then I say, as there is no Vertue in such an Ignorance, so neither will it be any Commendation not to be proud of that which we are thus Ignorant of. But then is Humility a Commendable Vertue, and truly deserving of that Praise which it does not seek, when a Man sees the height upon which he stands, and yet grows not giddy with it; when a Man knows his own Absolute and Comparative Excellencies, and yet possessest them in Sobriety, with which his bare seeing of them, and thinking that he is endued with them, is not at all inconsistent.

9. But what then becomes of that Lowliness of Mind which Humility Imports, or whereby does it express it self? I Answer, that it consists in this, that we think Meanly and Lowly of our selves upon the whole. That is, that though we think and know our selves to be Indued with such and such
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Excellencies, which cannot be well hid from us while we have them; yet we are not Exalted with them, do not think the more Highly or Worthily of our selves for them, do not value our selves upon the possession of them, or glory in them, any more than if we had them not, or knew not that we had them, as being sensible not only of other Faults or Imperfections in our selves that Counter-ballance, and for the most part outweigh those Excellencies, and so make it more reasonable for us, upon the whole, to be Low than High-minded; but also of our Dependency upon God, and that we have nothing but what we have receiv’d from him, and hold by his Will and Pleasure. For what though it be true that we have such and such Endowments and Perfections, yet since it is as true that we have them not from our selves (according to that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 4. 7. What hast thou that thou didst not receive) as we ought not to despise them that want them, so neither to think the more highly of our selves for having them, because we have them not of or from, though in our selves. For though by the Grace and Bounty of God we are something, yet of our selves we are nothing. And this I take to be that Loveliness of Mind which is Essentia to Humility, and wherein the nature of it does precisely consist; not
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that we should be Unapprehensive of any good in our selves, (for why should it be a Vice in me to know that which is a Vertue for me to have) but that considering our dependance upon God, we should think meanly of our selves upon the whole, though not Ignorant or Unconscions of certain particular Excellencies, which by his Bounty we possesse. Which two things are well put together by the Apostle St. Paul, who at once sets himself upon a level with the Worthiest of his Order, and yet professes a Mean and Low Opinion of himself at the same time. In nothing am I behind the very chief of the Apostles, though I be nothing, 2 Cor. 12. 11.

10. And this will serve to help us out with a Difficulty, which otherwise perhaps will not a little trouble and entangle us. Pride, we know, generally passes for a high Opinion of our selves, as being the opposite Vice to Humility, whose Character is Lowliness of Mind with reference to our selves. And indeed so it is in a certain Sense. It is truly a High, as Humility is a Low Opinion of our selves, and accordingly we call it High-mindedness: And the Psalmist so expresseth it when he says, Lord I am not High-minded, I have no proud looks, Psal. 131. And yet on the other side, may not those that are High, and Great, and Honourable, as King David was, think that they are so?
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And may not they also think the same, who are in some measure Wise, and Knowing, as his Son was, who thought it no Breach of Humility to say, that his Heart had great experience of Wisdom and Knowledge, and that he had gotten more Wisdom than all that had been before him in Jerusalem, Eccl. 1: 16. May not a Prince think himself more Honourable than a Peasant, and may not a Philosopher think himself Wiser than a poor Illiterate Mechanic? He must if he will think rightly, and therefore no doubt he may. And yet this is in some sense, to think Highly of our selves. It is plain therefore, that 'tis not all thinking highly of our selves that is Pride, (for then they that think most according to truth, and that best understand themselves, might be most guilty of it) but in general, the thinking more highly than we ought to think, as the Apostle states it, and which he opposes to thinking Soberly. Which thinking more highly, may more particularly be conceived to consist, either in thinking we have those Excellencies which we have not, or in being lifted up or exalted with those which we really have; that is, in plainer words, in thinking highly of our selves upon that Occasion.

II. But then when I say, thinking highly of our selves, (as indeed Pride is usually said to be an high Opinion of our selves) 'tis plain
plain by the foregoing Measures, that this is
not necessarily to be understood as to particular Excellencies, as if the bare thinking that
we have them, were in a faulty Sense to think.
Highly of our selves; (for 'tis possible that
we may really have them; and then to think
that we have them, is but to think the Truth,
and so to think Soberly:) but it is when we
think Highly of our selves Absolutely, and
upon the Whole, in the same Proportion as
was said before concerning Humility. That
is, when we not only think that we have
such and such Excellencies, for that is hardly
possible to be avoided if we have them, but
also indulge our Self-love so far, as to think
Highly of our selves for having them, Mag-
nifie and Applaud our selves for them, Sacri-
ficling to our own Net, and Burning Incense
to our own Drag, as the Scripture expresseth
it; Gloring in them as if they were not Re-
ceived, but were Products of our own Fund.
Things of a natural Growth, Originally and
Independently our own.

10. And herein, if I mistake not, lies the very
Essence and Spirit of Pride; and that which
makes it to be such a Wicked and Unree-
surely Sin as it is, and not in the bare thinking well of our selves as to particular Excellencies. For 'tis possible to suppose, Two
Men that may in that respect think equally well of themselves; that is, may think them-

C

elves
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selves equally Wife, or equally Good, equally Beautiful, or equally Honourable, and yet one of them shall be Proud, and the other not. And that because, though they both agree in having the like Opinion of themselves as to these particular Excellencies, yet the one considering himself as the Subject only of these Inherent Qualities, and not the Author, contents himself with knowing that he has them. And that indeed he cannot well avoid. But then knowing also from whence, he does not upon the whole, think the more Highly of himself upon their Account, and so possesse them without being lifted up with them; Whereas the other, not having a due Sense of his Dependency upon God (and so far not rightly understanding himself) is lifted up with those Excellencies which he sees in himself; that is, does upon the whole, and not only in a limited respect, think Highly of himself for them, which indeed is then too Highly, and above Measure; and so he comes under that General Character of the Apostle, of thinking more highly of himself than he ought to think.

13. Whence it seems to me to be very plain, that that High-mindedness, or High Opinion of our selves, supposed to Constute the nature of Pride, does not necessarily consist in the bare thought of our having such or such Perfections, but in that Elation of mind
mind which follows upon that Thought, in thinking Highly of our selves upon the whole, for them. As also that the true difference between an Humble Man and a Proud Man, does not necessarily consist in this, that the one sees the Perfections he has in himself, and the other not, (for they either do, or may both see them, and one in as good a Light as the other) but in those different Sentiments which arise in their Minds upon that Occasion, with relation to themselves respectively. And accordingly, when we say a Man is Proud of his Knowledge, we do not, or at least should not mean the same, as that he thinks himself indured with that Perfection, (though that common way of speaking, such a one is an Ingenious Man, and he knows it seems to favour that Conceit) but rather that he thinks Highly of himself upon that Opinion. For sure, not every one that thinks he knows more than other Men can be said to be proud of his Knowledge; but he that Values and Magnifies himself upon that Thought. So then, Pride does not properly lie in the Opinion we have of our Knowledge or any other Perfection, where with we conceive our selves Indured, but in that Sentiment of Self-esteem which follows upon that Opinion. For without doubt, the Angels that stood, might have the same Opinion of themselves, as to their particular Excel-
cellencies with those that fell; this being only the Result of having a full understanding of their Angelic Nature, to which, neither their Goodness nor their Happiness could be any hindrance, only being under a constant Sense of their Creaturely dependance upon God, they did not reflect upon themselves with any Self-esteem for them, and so upon the whole did not think Highly of themselves, but Soberly, and as they ought to Think. Whereas the latter, by some Unattentiveness or Dissipation of thought or other, proceeding perhaps from the Overdazzling Glory of their own Perfections, in the Contemplation of which they were but too ingaged, being Diverted from the actual Sense of that Dependance, grew into a forgetfulness of God, and a Fond, Vain-glorious Admiration of themselves, for those Excel-lencies which they could not but fee in themselves; fancying themselves as it were upon their own bottom, reposing themselves on themselves, and so enjoying the Warmth and Brightness of their own Light reflected to them, without reflecting it back again to the great Fountain of it.

14. The Ground and Sum of which whole matter, seems to be couch'd in those words of the Apostle, which I shall have occasion further to reflect upon hereafter; *Who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that*
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that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? 1 Cor. 4. 7. It is true indeed, that the Words are an Expostulation; but an Expostulation that proceeds upon a Supposition, which is Two-fold. First, That we have nothing but what we have received: Not that we have absolutely nothing, but nothing but what we are beholden for. Secondly, That to glory in what we have receiv'd, as if we had not receiv'd it, that is, not barely to think we have it, but to glory in it as Originally and Independently our own; so as upon the whole to Value our selves upon it, and think Highly of our selves for it, is the Sin of Pride. Then follows the Expostulation, why Men will be so Absurd, Foolish and Unreasonable, as to glory in, or for what they have received, as if they had not received it. Which comes to as much as to say, why will they be Proud, since they have nothing to be Proud of? How far this Consideration may be of Force to abate the Swelling Pride of Mens Hearts, and to prick that Bladder of Wind wherewith the generality of them are puffed up, is not my Businefs now to consider; and the less, because it will be hereafter. At present I am concern'd only to Remark, what the true Notion of Pride; according to the Apostle, seems to be; namely, that it is not to think that we have receiv'd, or are
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are possessed of such and such Perfections, but to Glory in them as if we had not received them.

15. Not but that it may be Pride too, to think we have certain particular Perfections, supposing we have them not, or which comes much to the same, if we have them not in that degree wherein we think we have them, though perhaps some would call this Conceit-edness rather than Pride. However, be it which it will, it is so only upon Supposition, that is, supposing us not to have received what we think our selves in possession of. But to Glory in what we have received, as if we had not received it, that is Pride Absolutely. And so in like Proportion as to Humility, (for these mutually Illustrate and Receive Light from each other) it may be one part of it, to think lowly of our selves as to particular Excellencies, that we have them not, or not in any considerable degree; but then this is Humility only upon Supposition, supposing that to be indeed the Case; otherwise, I know no Vertue there can be in thinking so, or Obligation so to think. But that which is Humility, Absolutely and Simply speaking, is when a Man, though not insensible of his particular Gifts and Endowments, does yet upon the whole, think lowly of himself, possesses them in Sobriety, without any Self-Attribution, Self-Admiration, or
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Self-Complacency, being no more Elated for them than if he had them not, and though full of Excellencies in himself, is not at all full of himself. This I take to be true Christian Humility, and that which is Absolutely such, it being such a Sense of a Man's self, as every Man upon the whole ought always to have, let his particular Perfections and Endowments be what they will.

16. And in thus thinking lowly of our selves, there can be no mistake on either side, neither as to our Perfections, nor as to our selves. Not as to our Perfections, since tho' we are not Exalted in our selves by any Vain Complacencies and Self-Admiraions for them, yet we are not here supposed to deny but that we have them. Which would be not only to offend against Truth, but against Gratitude to, in disowning the Graces and Favours of our great Benefactor. Not also as to our selves, since the true state of our selves (as will appear hereafter) is indeed no other than this Absolute Opinion of our selves Supposes and Represents, which though it be accounted Low for so doing, is yet as High as we can pretend to deserve, who have nothing from our selves, and every thing from God. So that there is Justice done every way.

17. And indeed as we cannot well in this way, of thinking Meanly and Vilely of our selves, descend too Low; or degrade our selves too
too Far; so if what is said by some Spiritual Persons concerning the utter Extermination of our selves, the Mystical Death and Self Annihilation, &c. be intended in this absolute sense of thinking Lowly of our selves, it ought not to pass for a High Strain of Spirituality; much less for Enthusiastic Cant, but (allowing only for the particularity of the Expressions) for a Sober and Well-grounded Truth. But indeed if it be meant as to particular Excellencies or Endowments, as if we were to see no such thing in our selves, but in that respect also to look upon our selves as nothing, I do not see how it can be maintain'd. Nor do I think it any Service to Religion to Interpret the Duties of it so, as to make them Inconsistent with good Sense.

18. Again Thirdly, when Humility is made to consist in a Low Opinion of our selves, I suppose this is not so to be understood, as if we were to have a Vile and a Base Esteem of Human Nature as it is in itself, or of that Human Nature whereby we are Men. We may indeed be sensible of its Limitations and Defects, so as not to over-value it, or our selves for it; but Absolutely to think Basely of it, I think we ought not. For this would be, to despise and undervalue one of the Master Pieces of the Divine Workmanship, which to do even to the meanest of them, especially, after the declared Approbation of them by
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by him that made them; would perhaps better deserve the Name of an Impious and Saucy Pride, than of a Pious Humility. For what are we, that we should sit in Judgment upon the Works of God to Vilifie and Disparage them, which were made all in Number, Weight and Measure, by an Almighty Power, condued by an Infinite Wisdom. This mean Opinion then, I suppose, is to be understood chiefly of Human Nature, as it is now in this Corrupt and Degenerate state of it, and especially as lodged in our own particular Persons, that which we properly call our Selves. And this Corrupt Nature of ours, is also to be thought meanly of, not so much as a Nature, as a Corrupt Nature. For as Corrupt as our Nature is, we have nothing Substantial in us but what is Good, and a great deal that is Excellent, being made in the Image and Likeness of God, which still in great Measure shines forth in us. And accordingly, this is given as the Reason why Murther is to be punished with Death, because 'tis the Violation of a Creature made after God's Image; which Consideration would not be of that force, if part of that Divine Image did not still remain in him. And besides this same Corrupt Nature of ours, is the very Nature, as to the Substance of it, that will hereafter be Glorified. Which shews that this Nature of ours, as a Nature, is not fo
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so Lowly to be thought of. Human Nature so consider'd, is still the Object of our just Esteem. And in this sense I suppose it is, that we are Advised to Reverence our selves, that is, that Human Nature which is in us. Of whose Dignity to be sensible, is also look'd upon as a great Security against Vice and Wickedness; and which now, since the great Honour done it by the Incarnation of Christ, has a New and Peculiar Title to our Respect. But indeed, considering our Natures as Corrupt, we cannot well think too Low, either of them or of our selves, since our Nature is now become the Seat and Subject of a great many Evils; and all the Good that is in us, is a stream that derives from another Fountain.

39. Which points out to us another Consideration, wherein we are to think Meanly of our selves, and that is consider'd as a Principle. And this is a Consideration that will hold in any state of Human Nature, Corrupt or Intire, now in this Mortal Life, or hereafter in Glory. Forasmuch as we are not, never were, nor ever shall be to our selves, the Principle of that Good which we have in our selves, as having nothing of that kind but what we have received. And accordingly thus again, we cannot well think too Meanly of our selves. And so far Humility is Absolutely concern'd. But as to particular Perfections,
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sections, which we may have or not have, here Humility will be concern'd in thinking of our selves according as the Case is. Humility obliges me not to think my self Better than I am, or Wiser than I am. And this general Obligation indeed always holds: But as to this or that particular Perfection, the measure is, that I must not think I have it if I have it not. For to think so, is to think of my self above what I ought to think, because tis above what I really am, which is Pride and Vanity. But how? Only upon Supposition; the Supposition of not being or having, what I think my self to be or have. For if you change the Supposition, the thing will change too; and that which was before Pride, will be but a Just and Sob'rr Opinion of my self. But to think that I have that or any other Perfection of my self, or which is all one, to Value my self for it, or to Glory in it, as if I derived it from that Original; this is Pride. Absolutely. For this is to think Highly of my self under the Consideration of a Principle, as if I my self were the Principle of that Perfection which is in my self, plainly against that of the Apostle, why dost thou Glory as if thou badst not receiv'd, which is Absolutely against Humility, which obliges me in this Respect, always to think Lowly of my self. And if I do so, there will be no occasion to think Bafely of that Nature.
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ture which God has given me, unless with Relation to this Corrupt and Disorder'd state of it, as was said before.

20. Not but that the Human Nature itself, as indeed any other Nature except the Divine, may possibly be over-valued. For tho’ we are not to think Disparagingly of that Excellent Nature which God has given us, and which he has now, as I may say, given himself too; yet we are in Humility obliged, not to think that he has given us a better Nature than indeed he has. And who knows, but that this might make a part in the Pride of Angels. ’Tis not unlikely, that they might value themselves too much upon their Angelic Order, to which they had some particular Temptation, as having a whole Species of Intellectual Creatures below them. But we have not that Reason, as being in the lowest form of Intelligence, Inferior to Angels, and but a degree above the Brutes. Nor do Men use to be Proud of that Nature which they have in Common, but of those personal Endowments whereby they are distinguish’d. On the contrary, Men are apt for the most part to think too meanly of their Natures, and so to sink beneath themselves, in not endeavouring to Act up to the true Dignity of their Condition: So unhappily verifying that of the Psalmist, Man being in Honour hath no Understanding, but is compared unto the Beasts that