163 Humility (*Humilitas*)

According to Bernard, *De gradibus humilitatis*,[[1]](#endnote-1) humility is a virtue by which man in his truest knowledge counts himself as worthless. Wherefore also humility according to some[[2]](#endnote-2) is said to be a short ladder of ascending, a little school of perfection, and a short way of salvation.

¶ Concerning the first, a ladder has two extremities, a bottom and a top; two sides, a right and a left; in space three steps. The lowest of this ladder is the fear of punishment, the highest is the love of reward, Psal. [138:8]: “If I ascend into heaven, you are there: if I descend into hell, you are present.” The right side is moderation in prosperity, the left side is patience in adversity, 2 Cor. 6[:7]: “By the armor of justice on the right hand and on the left.”

¶ Again, on the first step is contempt of the world; on the second is rejection of the self; on the third is the love of God. This is the ladder of Jacob, Gen. 28[:12].

¶ Concerning the second, that humility is a little school of perfection is evident through this that it is called a collection of all justice. Wherefore also it is called “all justice,” Matt. 3[:15]. “So, it becomes us to fulfill all justice,” that is, humility. Therefore, your master Christ reduces so much verbosity of the law to a certain summary, that is, a method of humility, Matt. 11[:29]: “Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.”

¶ Concerning the third, that humility becomes a short way of salvation is evident for when one seeks the center, he avoids the circular course and the circuitous route and makes the straight diameter until he comes to the end, Isai. 30[:21]: “This is the way, walk in it.”

Again,[[3]](#endnote-3) note that certain humble ones diminish themselves through thinning and making tender so that they may be more pleasing to their spouse. For thinning attests to incorruptibility just as on the contrary swelling denotes corruption. Wherefore also it is to be noted that some are swollen and inflated from the nobility of their birth and such ones are impregnated as if in their own father just as the daughters of Lot, Gen. 19[:36]. Some are inflated from the multitude of underlings and such ones are impregnated as if by the whole people, just as David who numbered his whole people, 2 Kings 24[:2]. Some are inflated from themselves in corruption and so as if they are impregnated of virginity itself. So, the foolish virgins who while they sought glory from their virginity, they did not wish to have oil in their lamps, Matt. 25[:1-10].

Again,[[4]](#endnote-4) humility inclines itself so that it may ascend, it reduces itself to ashes so that it may emit a scent, and it kills itself so that it may arise. For the branch having fruit is bent, the ear of grain is bent with weight. So, the humble one, but the upright branch shows itself to be empty of fruit, Matt. 7[:16]: “By their fruits you shall know them.”

¶ Again,[[5]](#endnote-5) the humble one reduces himself to ashes and pulverizes himself, so that it may more emit an odor like to an aromatic species, Can. [3:6]: “Who is she that goes up … as a pillar of smoke of aromatic spices, of myrrh, and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer?” And one ought to consider himself as dust because of many things. First, because of the vileness, because when something is covered in dust, although it is of a precious material, it is considered vile, Psal. [14:4]: “In his sight the malignant is brought to nothing.” Third, because of the difficulty of resisting, for ashes are immediately dispersed, nor does it resist, so man the sinner, [Psal. 1:4]: “Not so the wicked, not so: but like the dust.” Fourth, because of the impossibility of rising again, because just as ashes cannot return to their original state, thus neither can the sinner of himself without grace, because it is said in Eccle. 7[:14]: “No man can correct whom God has despised.” And Psal. [126:1]: “Unless the Lord keep the city, he watches in vain that keeps it.”

Again,[[6]](#endnote-6) the humble one mortifies himself so that he may rise again, for the memory of death makes many good things. For first it makes sins flee, just as the face of the judge crushes the thief, and the tail of the beast drives off the flies. Second, it makes one to despise the world. Wherefore, Jerome,[[7]](#endnote-7) he easily contemns all, who thinks he is about to die. For he despises the concupiscence of the eyes who thinks he is about to go into the earth.

Again,[[8]](#endnote-8) he despises the concupiscence of the flesh who disposes his flesh delicately nourished to be food for worms. And he despises the pride of life when he considered that he who wishes to be above others is put under the earth, which is the lowest element.

¶ Again, the memory of death makes one to rule himself rightly, and so the helmsman of a ship puts himself in the stern of the ship, Eccli. 7[:40]: “Remember your last end, and you shall never sin.”

¶ Again,[[9]](#endnote-9) it makes one discern rightly between the present and the future. For one considering death puts himself amid all, Eccli. 11[:27]: “In the day of good things be not unmindful of evils.”

¶ Again, humility chooses better than pride because pride chooses the bark, the external, and the apparent; humility chooses the kernel; pride the straw; humility the grain; pride the leaf; humility the fruit, Can. 2[:3]: “His fruit was sweet to my palate.”

Again, pride chooses the mountains, humility the valleys. Wherefore, note that on the mountain there are four evils: the dryness of irreverence, the hardness of not sharing another’s suffering, the sterility of labor, the falling headlong of expulsion. But the valleys are supplied with water against dryness, soft against hardness, bountiful against sterility, secure against falling headlong, Psal. [75:3]: “His place is in peace.”

¶ For these things note[[10]](#endnote-10) that five things are accustomed to humble a man, if they would be looked at closely, what are below, what are within, what are next to, what are against, and what are above. And for first the consideration of the corporal creature humiliates, that the earth offers a grave, the fire a punishment, that the four-footed animals are more powerful, that the birds of the air are nimbler, things born of the earth are more fruitful and more beautiful.

¶ Again,[[11]](#endnote-11) note that the proper subject is in the beginning the unclean seed, in the middle the sack of dung, and in the end the food for worms. Having considered these things, humility revives and takes up again the powers, just as moss in stinking places recuperates its smell. Therefore, said Abraham, Gen. 18[:27]: “I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes.”[[12]](#endnote-12) Just as in Prov. 11[:2] it is said, “Where humility is, there also is wisdom.” But on the contrary it can be said “Where pride is, there also shall be folly,” but in man the consideration of his proper graces impedes humility. Wherefore, Ovid narrates in the *Metamorphoses*,[[13]](#endnote-13) concerning the perverse Narcissus that he had been loved by all and he was never was directed to the love of women, about whom a certain seer when asked responded that thus he would endure until he would see himself. Time passed. And the boy once tired out from the hunt withdrew being thirsty next to a pool so that he may free himself from the thirst. In which pool when he saw his own image, he was captured by love of himself, he grew faint, and died.

¶ The moral interpretation is thus; many look down upon others to be delighted in their own virtues and expose too much of themselves. Wherefore they die, so he who looks too much at the sun clouds the acuity of his eyes too much, so he who is delighted too much in his own virtues.

¶ Again,[[14]](#endnote-14) humility is differentiated in three ways. For one is treacherous and deceitful, Eccli. 19[:23]: “There is one that humbles himself wickedly, and his interior is full of deceit.” And this humility is called foxy, namely, therefore for avoiding the hypocrites, Eccli. 12[:11]: “Though he humbles himself and go crouching … take good heed and beware of him.” The second is causing pain or testing, Dan. 3[:37]: “We are brought low in all the earth this day for our sins.” And this is asinine humility which willy-nilly bears burdens, but this is to be tolerated, Eccli. 2[:4]: “In your humiliation keep patience.” The third is meritorious and virtuous about which Luke 1[:48]: “He has regarded the humility of his handmaid.” This is the dove-like humility, therefore, to be embraced, Eccli. 13[:9]: “Humble yourself to God, and wait for his hands,” that is, the reward, about this humility three things ought to be considered: things assumed, things shown, and things preserved.

¶ Things assumed are three. First is the consideration of one’s own vileness. In the proverb,[[15]](#endnote-15) the peacock seeing the foulness of his feed humbles his tail, so he who considers what lies in the belly, what goes out through the hole of the body ought to be humbled, Mich. 6[:14]: “Your humiliation shall be in the midst of you.” Eccli. 10[:9]: “Why is earth and ashes proud?”

Second, persuasion is the snow of Sacred Scripture, the drop of water often falling hollows out a rock,[[16]](#endnote-16) thus truth noted turns a man to becoming humble, Eccli. 7[:19]: “Humble your spirit very much.” Judith 8[:16]: “Let us humble our souls before him.” 1 Pet. 5[:5]: “Do you all insinuate humility one to another.”

¶ Third is the imitation of divine humility. For because a good and wise man chooses these things more, humility is to be chosen, Matt. 11[:29]: “Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.” Philip. 2[:8]: “He humbled himself … unto death.” Prov. 16[:19]: “It is better to be humbled with the meek, than to divide spoils with the proud.”

Thing shown of humility are three, of which the first is the sorrow of penance. For just as to be turned away from God is a sign of pride, so to be turned toward God is a sign of humility, 3 Kings 21[:29]: “Have you not seen Achab humbled before me?” Psal. [50:19]: “A contrite and humbled heart, O God, you will not despise.” Second is the love of patience, Eccli. 2[:5]: “Just as gold and silver are tried in the fire, so … men in the furnace of humiliation.” Third is labor of obedience, Gen. 16[:9]: “Return to your mistress and humble yourself under her hand.” And Eccli. 3[:20]: “The greater you are, the humbler yourself in all things.”

¶ Things preserved are three, for humility makes three goods. First, it takes away fault just as prostrating oneself before a lion mitigates his anger, Psal. [114:6]: “I was little, and he delivered me.”

Second, it gains one grace, to the degree that he is more virtuous, he who exposes his body to the sun so much the more does he grow warm, 1 Pet. 5[:5]: “God resists the proud, but to the humble he gives grace.”

¶ Third, it multiplies glory, just as a grain falling on fruitful earth brings forth, Job 22[:29]: “He that has been humbled, shall be in glory.” Prov. 15[:33]: “Humility goes before glory.”

Again, by various ways men here and in the future are exalted, just as is evident in David and Ezechias. Some here and in the future are humiliated as the proud poor men Herod, Antiochus, Nabugodonosor, Pilate, about whom spoke Jer. [17:18]: “With a double destruction, destroy them,” O Lord. Some are exalted here and are humbled in the future, as the proud rich men who lead lives here in good days, but in a moment descend to hell. Some are humbled here and in the future are exalted, as the holy poor men who have left their goods because of God.

Wherefore, Bernard, *Sermo* 34,[[17]](#endnote-17) some are humbled who are not humble, for also some are humbled unworthily, some patiently, some freely, of whom the first are real, the second are harmless, the third are just, who can say with the Psal. [118:71]: “It is good for me that you have humbled me.” But they cannot say this who put up with it unwillingly; however, even less he who murmurs. For he is humble who converts humiliation into humility, who can say with the Psal. [118:71]: “It is good for me that you have humbled me.”

Wherefore, Gregory, *In Dominica quarta in adventu*,[[18]](#endnote-18) in all things which you do, hold on to humility, the root of good work, look not to those you are now above, but to those you are up to this point below, as now you offer us examples of better things that you be able to ascend to greater things.

¶ Again, Bernard, *Super Cantica*, homily 16,[[19]](#endnote-19) strive for the praise of humility, it is not the virtue of humility, but its overturn. For the true humble man wishes to be reputed vile, not to be proclaimed humble. They rejoice in their own contempt. This alone is pride, which praise contemns.

Again, Ptolemy in his *Proverbis*,[[20]](#endnote-20) says those who among the wise is humbler, among the wise is wiser. The experienced say such as Pliny in the second book of *Naturalis Philosophie*,[[21]](#endnote-21) that one standing in a deep pit with the sun shining at mid-day sees the stars in the heaven, so one existing in humility.

Again, because Solomon was humble in the beginning of his reign received grace and wisdom in the figure of these when the Lord appeared to Moses in the bramble bush of the desert, in the cedar of Lebanon.

Again, in the elements what is more humble and lower is more stable and fruitful, namely, earth and in the trees, what is humbler and more despised in appearance has sweeter fruit, a more delightful odor, a more marvelous ascent, namely, the grapevine. In metals, what is deeper is better, namely, gold is in places which is lower, is more fertile, and safer from perils, so through all things it is concerning humility, Isai. 40[:4]: “Every valley shall be exalted,” namely, from unfruitful to fruitful, because according to the Psal. [64:14]: “The vales shall abound with corn.” And every mountain and hill shall be humbled. Michol, because she despised David dancing before the Lord, was made sterile, 2 Kings 6[:16]. And when they were in the temple three inside, however, the holy of holies was in the lowest part alone, 3 Kings 6[:15-16].

Again, a concave mirror collects so much of the heat of the object of the sun that of itself it generates fire where the full mirror drives back the rays and disperses them, so the concavity of humility receives the heat of the Holy Spirt and generates the fire of divine love where the fullness of pride repels it. In these things it is figured, the Lord commanded Moses to make him an altar concave on the inside, Exod. 27[:8]. That it may be receptive of fire, and the pride of Agar afterwards was humbled and turned back to her mistress, having conceived and brought forth, [Gen. 16:4-10], so humility renders a person fruitful.

See more concerning humility above, chapter [87] To Increase (*Crescere*).

¶ Again, humility can be called the concept of proper excellence, about which Jerome, *Epistola* 87,[[22]](#endnote-22) fleeing false humility, imitate that which is true. For many follow the shadow of this virtue, few follow the truth. The figments of words are taken away, simulated gestures cease, and the patience of an injury tests the humble man. Wherefore, Gregory says in his first *Dialogo*, c. 16,[[23]](#endnote-23) however one hides himself, contumely tests those things, because just as the proud are glorified by honors, so the humble sometimes are glorified by their contempt.

Again, Augustine, *Super Joannem*, homily 25,[[24]](#endnote-24) so that evil pride might be cured, the Son of God was made humble. Why therefore are you proud, O man? If because of you God was made humble. If you are ashamed to follow a humble man, perhaps you will be ashamed to imitate a humble God.

¶ The example of humility is in the Blessed Virgin, Luke 2[:48]: “God has regarded the humility of his handmaid.” And in Blessed John the Baptist, who when he was brought forth greater among those born of women, he said, “the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loosen,” [John 1:27]. Where Gregory said, book 1, *Super Evangelium*, homily 7,[[25]](#endnote-25) if holy men when they do mighty things, consider them vile concerning themselves, what in their excuse is to be said who without a work of virtue inflate themselves. The example is of David whom marvelous deeds did not exalt, Psal. [131:1]: “Lord, my heart is not exalted.”

¶ Again, Gregory in his *Homilia*,[[26]](#endnote-26) whoever gathers virtues without humility, he is as if one who carried dust in the wind. Certainly, humility is a glorious thing in which pride seeks to be dressed lest it become worthless.[[27]](#endnote-27) And there are three species of humility.[[28]](#endnote-28) The first is within and enough when one subjects himself to one greater and does not makes himself appear to be equal. The second is said to be abundant when one subjects himself to one equal and does not make himself be less. The third is said to be superabundant, namely, to subject himself to one less in which degree is fulfilled all justice, according to that of Matt. 3[:15]: “So it becomes us to fulfill all justice.”

1. Bernard, *De gradibus humilitatis* 1.2 (PL 182:942): Humilitas est virtus, qua homo verissima sui agnitione sibi ipsi vilescit. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 7.1 (*Opera* 8:311b-312a): Nota igitur, quod humilitas est brevis scala devotionis, brevis schola perfectionis, et brevis via salvationis. Brevis, inquam, scala, si vis ascendere; brevis schola, is vis addiscere; et brevis via, si vis incedere. Et nota tria in scala humilitate, scilicet scalae extremum, imum et supremum; scalae latera, dextrum et sinistrum; scalae spatia, scilicet triplicem gradum. Habet enim scala humilitatis duo extrema, imum, et supremum. Imum vel pes hujus scalae, est timor supplicii; supremum vero est amor praemii. Unde Psalmista ait: *Si ascendero in caelum, tu illic es; si descendero ad infernum,* etc. Item habet scala duo latera, scilicet dextrum et sinistrum: dextrum est temperantia in prosperis; sinistrum patientia in adversis. Unde Apostolus: *Per arma justitiae, a dextris et a sinistris.* Item ex scala habet tria spatia, vel tgres gradus, inter quos primus est contemptus mundi, scundus est humilis abjectio sui, tertius est humilis amor Dei. Haec est scala Jacob, de qua dicitgur in Genesi. Item est humilitas brevis schola, est enim compendium totius justitiae. Unde ipsa dicitur omnis Justitia in Matthaeo: sic enim decet nos implore omnem justitiam, glossa, id est, humilitatem. Ideo Salvator et magister optimus in sua schola prolixitatem totius legis reduxit ad quondam summam, id est, ad methodum humilitatis, dicens: Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde. ... Est insuper humilitas sicut brevis via, quia quum humilitas petat centrum, per consequens vetat circulum et specialem circuitum, et facit diametrum, et diametraliter pertransit spatium, et ita rectissime venit ad terminum. Ideo dicit Isaias: *Haec est via, ambulate in ea.*

Cf. Prolegomena Zu Einer Neuen Ausgabe der *Imitatio Christi*, ed Karl Hirsche pp. 182-183. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 7.1 (*Opera* 8:312a-b): Humilitas se attenuat et sic facit seipsam gracilem ad modum. Unde humilitas est gracilitas sponsæ quæ sponsum incitat ad ejus amo rem Et causa hujus est quia gracilitas signi ficat vel attestatur incorruptionem sicut e contrario tumor significat corruptam esse muodorem lierem et prægnantem Unde nota quod qui dam tument et inflantur de genere et nobilitate et tales imprægnantur a proprio patre sicut filiæ Loth ut habetur in *Genesi.* Quidam in flantur de subditorum multitudine et potestate, et tales imprægnantur a toto populo sicut David qui fecit murmurare populum ut dicitur in secundo *Regum*. Quidam etiam tutriplicem ment et inflantur de incorruptione corporis et per consequens, quod detestabile, imprægnantur a virginitate sicut fatuæ virgines de quibus dicitur in *Matthæo*. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 7.1. (*Opera*, 8:313a): Item nota, quod humilitas se humiliate vt ascendat, se incinerat vt redoleat, se mortificat vt resurgat. Humilitas itaque se humiliat & Semper inclinat. Sicut enim ramus, in quo pendet fructius, et sicut spica plena grano, respicit et declinat versus terram. Sic anima humilis, quae instar rami, quae est onusta fructibus bonorum operum, et ad modum spicae granatae est plena granis virtutum, respicit terram, id est, propriam fragilitatem, et carnis ver corporis conditionem terrenum. E contrario ramus erectus monstrat, quod in eo est nullus fructus, et spica erecta, quod est gracilis et vactuita homo per superbis erectus, est ad modum rami sterilis et infructuosi. Et ideo dicit Saluator in Mattheo *A fructibus eorum, cognoscetis eos*. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 7.1. (*Opera*, 8:313a): Humilitas etiam se incinerat et puluerizat, et sic suauius fragrat, sict herbe et spcies aromaticae, plus redolent, quanto sane munutias tritae et puluerizatae. Vnde dicitur in Canticis: Quae est ista, quae ascendit per defectu, sicut virgule fumi ex aromatibus myrrhae, & thuris, & vniversi pulueris pigmentarii. Et notandum quod omnis homo debet se puluerem et cinerem reputare et parte carnis, de qua certus est, quod efficietur puluis, vt dicitur in Gen. *Puluis es, et in puluerem reuertetis*. Ex parte animae, debet se quilibet puluerem et cinemrem reputare, precipue propter tria. Primo propter vilitatem. Sicut enim cinis est vilis, quantumcumque fuerit de pretiosa materia sic anima valde vilis est ex culpa, quamvis sit valde nobilis ex natura Ideo dicit Psal. And nihilum deductus est in conspecta eius malignus. Secundo propter resistendi difficultatem. Quia sicut cinis statim despergitur, et non potest resistere modico flatui sic homo non potest resistere modicae tentationi, immo frequenter cadit ad sibilum modici verbi. Vnde diditur in Psal. , etc. Tercio propter resurgendi impossibilitatem. Nam sicut cinis non potest redire ad statum suae materiae sic homo peccator non potest redire ad statum gratiae, nisi sola Dei virtute, quia dicit Ecclesiastes, *Nemo potest corrigere quem Deus despexit* et in Psalmo *Nisi Dominus edificauerit domum*, etc. Humilitas in super se mortificat, vt resurgat quia humilis quasi semper considerat mortem propriam, vt resurgat ad viam. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaeta Salutis* 7.1 (*Opera Omnia* 8:313b): Humilitas insuper se mortificat ut resurgat quia humilis quasi semper considerat mortem propriam ut resurgat ad vitam Et nota quod memoria mortis facit in homine præcipue sex bona Primo facit peccata vel vitia fugere nam sicut latrones timent et fugiunt faciem judicis sic vitia memoriam mortis. Et sicut jumentum cum cauda se defendit a muscis ....

Secundo facit mundum contemnere unde dicit Hieronymus, “Facile contemnit omnia qui se semper cogitat moriturum.” Nam concupiscentia oculorum contemnitur quando quis cogitat se in terram reversurum....

Tertio facit seipsum ....

Quarto facit vitam præsentem recte regere sicut enim gubernator navis se ponit in cauda ut rectius gubernet navem sic qui in mari hujus mundi yult recte et secure navigare novissima sua debet cogitare vel recordari Nam dicitur in *Ecclesiastico Memorare novissima et in æternum non peccabis.* [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Jerome, *Epistola* 53.10 (PL 22:549): FACILE contemnit omnia, qui se semper cogitat esse moriturum. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 7.1 (*Opera Omnia* 8:313b-314a): Secundo facit mundum contemnere: unde dicit Hieronymus: Facile contemnit Omnia, qui se semper cogitate moriturum. Nam concupiscentia oculorum contemnitur, quando quis cogitate se in terram reversurum; concupiscentia carnis deprimitur, quando quis cogitate, quod corpus in deliciis nutritum, erit cibus vermium; superbia vitae contemnitur, quando quis cogitate, quod ille qui vult esse super alios, ponetur sub terra, quae est infimum elementorum. Tertio facit seipsum despicere, et, propter resolutionem ad terram, in suiipsius cognitionem venire. Qui modus cognoscendi, secundum Philosophum, est certissimus inter omnes. Proptereas dicitur in Psalmo: *Sciant gentes, quaniam homines sunt,* id est, de humo. Quarto facit vitam presentem recte regere: sicut enim gubernator navis se point in cauda, ut rectius gubernet navem; sic qui in mari hujus mundi vult recte et secure navigare, novissima sua debet cogitare vel recordari. Nam dicigtur in Ecclisastico: *Memorare novissima, et in aeternum non peccabis.*

*…*

Sexto facit recte divider praesentem, et futuram vitam: qui enim point se in articulo mortis, et eam diligenter considerat, quasi in medio praesentis et future vitae se collocat: et ideo recte videt, quid spernere, et quid eligere debeat. Ideo dicitur in Ecclesiastico: *In die bonorum, ne immemor sis malorum.* [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetate salutis* 7.1 (8:314a): Sexto facit recte dividere præsentem et futuram vitam qui enim ponit se in articulo mortis et eam diligenter considerat quasi in medio præsentis et futuræ se collocat et ideo recte videt quid spernere et quid eligere debeat Ideo dicitur in *Ecclesiastico*: *In die bonorum ne immemor sis malorum.* [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 7.1 “De Humilitate,” in *Opera Omnia* (Paris: Ludovicus Vives, 1866), (8:315b): Unde nota quod sunt quinque causæ præcipuæ ex qua rum consideratione debet homo seipsum humi liare si consideret quæ sunt infra quæ intra quæ sunt juxta quæ sunt contra et que sunt supra Prima igitur causa humilitatis est consideratio creaturæ corporalis quæ in homiest ne est Debet igitur creaturas corporales diligeneligit ter considerare et ex illis humilitatem haurire Si enim consideret terram videt proprium seeligit pulcrum si attendat ignem super terram videt supplicium peccatorum si consideret quadrujuxta pedia videt ea fortiora si volatilia videt ea leSuperbia viora et agiliora si terræ nascentia videt melionota ra sicut fructus et pulchriora sicut flores. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 7.1 “De Humilitate,” in *Opera Omnia* (Paris: Ludovicus Vives, 1866), (8:315b): Ultimo si consideret proprium subjectum videt quod in principio est semen immundum in medamnationis dio saccus stercorum et in fine cibus vermium ut dicit Bernardus 10 Et iterum vide unde veneris et erubesce ubi es et ingemisce quo vadis et contremisce Et ita cum homo diligenter consi derat proprias vilitates tunc humilitas resumit vires Sicut enim muscus in locis fætentibus recuperat odorem sic humilitas fragrantior efficitur cum quis considerat propriam utilinam tatem Et ideo dicebat Abraham *Loquar ad Dominum meum cum sim pulvis et cinis* [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 7.1 “De Humilitate,” in *Opera Omnia* (Paris: Ludovicus Vives, 1866), (8:315a): Superbia eligit corticem, humilitas nucleum. Superbia eligit paleam, humilitas granum. Superbia demum eligit flores, humilitas vero fructum juxta illud: *Fructus ejus dulcis gutturi meo.* Superbia eligit montes, humilitas valles. Et nota, quod in montibus sunt quatuor mala, scilicet ariditas indevotionis, durities incompassionis, sterilitas opertionis, et praecipitium damnationis. Humilitas vero eligit valles, in quibus sunt quatuor bona, illis malis opposite: nam sicut valles contra ariditatem sunt irriguae, contra duritiam sunt molles, contra sterilitatem sunt fructiferae, contra praecipitium sunt securae; [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.339-510 (LCL 42:148-160). [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Cf. Monumenta Medii Aevi, *De vitiis clericorum*, (Gottingae: Bossigelianis, 1757), p.51: Verum est, quod in scriptura lego triplicem humiliationem. Primo est proditoria et dolosa, quae est humilitas vulpina, quae est fugienda. Et ista est humilitas hypocritarum simulantium humilitatem et sanctitatem, qui veniunt in vestimentis ouium, et intrinsecus sunt lupi [p. 52] rapaces, de quibus dicitur Eccles. XIX *Est qui nequiter5 se humiliate, et interior eius plena sunt dolo,* ad litteram, sicut dicit B. Bernardus: Ipsi volunt esse humiles sine despectu, paupers sine defectu, Eccles. XII *Si humiliates videatur torus, abiice animum tuum et custody te ab illo*. Quia sicut dicit B. Hieronymus in Epistola ad Colossenses: Deformior est superbia, que sub quibusdam humilitatis signis apparet, altetue facto. Quoniam turpiora sunt vitia, cum virtutum specie occultantur. Secunda humilitas est afflictoria. Et ista est humilitas asinine, qua homo humiliatur, velit nolit. Sicut asinus, velit nolit, portat onus. Et ista est toleranda. Quia sicut dicitur Ecclesiast. II in dolore sustine, et in humilitate tua patientiam habe. Tertia humilitas est meritoria et gloriosa, quae est humilitas columbina. Et haec est inducenda. Et ad hanc hortatur Apostolus. Et hanc debemus amplecti et inducere propter multa. Primo, propter propriae vilitatis considerationem. Sicut pauo, qui, videns pedem, humiliate caudam suam. Eccles. X. *Quid superbis: Terra et cinis?* 2 Reg. VI*. Ero humilis in oculis meis, etc.* Secundo, propter scripturae sacrae persuasionem. Vbique clamat, quod humiliemus nos, Eccles. VI. *Humilia spiritum tuum valde,* Iudic. VIII. *Humiliemus illi animas nostras.* Tertio, propter humilitatis diuinae imitationem. Quod enim eligit bonus et humilis, est eligendum, Matth. XI. *Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde, etc.* Quarto, propter oppositi detestationem. *Qui odibilis Deo et hominibus superbia,* Eccli. X. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Cf. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* 12.31 (1505, p. 236b): Videns autem pedum suorum deformitatem quasi erubescit, et velut non attendens predicta pennarum pulcritudinem eas subito deprimit et submittit.

And he wondereth of the fairness of his feathers, and areareth them up as it were a circle about his head, and then he looketh to his feet, and seeth the foulness of his feet, and like as he were ashamed he letteth his feathers fall suddenly, and all the tail downward, as though he took no heed of the fairness of his feathers. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Cf. Phillip le Chancellor, *Summa super Psalterium*: Ps 17:30 Sermo 36 G: **Gutta** cavat lapidem non vi sed sepe cadendo. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Bernard, *In Cantica Canticorum*, sermo 34.3 (PL 183:960-961): Humiliatio. Quanti humiliantur, qui humiles non sunt? Alii cum rancore humiliantur, alii patienter, alii et libenter. Primi rei sunt, sequentes innoxii, ultimi justi. Quanquam et innocentiaportio justitiae est, sed consummatio ejus apud humilem; qui autem dicere potest: Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me, is vere humilis est. Non potest hoc dicere qui invitus tolerat; minus, qui murmurat. Neutri horum promittimus gratiam, quod humiliatur: etsi sane longe hi duo a se differant, et alter quidem in patientia sua possideat animam suam, alter in suo murmure pereat. Sed enim etsi unus iram, neuter tamen gratiam promeretur; quoniam non humiliatis, sed humilibus Deus dat gratiam. Est autem humilis, qui humiliationem convertit in humilitatem, et ipse est qui dicit Deo: Bonum mihi quod humiliasti me. Nemini prorsus, quod patienter fert, bonum est, sed plane molestum. Scimus autem quod hilarem datorem diligit Deus (II Cor. IX, 7). Unde et cum jejunamus, jubemur caput nostrum ungere oleo, et faciem lavare (Matth. VI, 17), ut nostrum scilicet opus bonum spirituali quodam gaudio condiatur, et holocaustum nostrum pingue fiat. Etenim sola gratiam, quam praefert, meretur laeta et absoluta humilitas. Quae enim coacta fuerit vel extorta, qualis utique est in viro patiente illo qui possidet animam suam; haec, inquam, humilitas, etsi vitam obtinet propter patientiam, propter tristiam tamen gratiam non habebit. Non enim congruit ei, qui ejusmodi est, illud Scripturae: Glorietur humilis in exaltatione sua (Jac. I, 9); quoniam non sponte humiliatur, neque libenter. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Gregory, *Homilia* 7.4 (PL 76:1103): In cunctis ergo quae agitis, fratres mei, radicem boni operis humilitatem tenete; nec quibus jam superiores, sed quibus adhuc inferiores estis, aspicite, ut dum meliorum vobis exempla proponitis, ad majora semper ascendere ex humilitate valeatis. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Bernard, *Sermones in Cantica* 16.10 (PL 183:853): Appetere autem de humilitate laudem, humilitatis est, non virtus, sed subversio. Verus humilis vilis vult reputari, non humilis praedicari. Gaudet contemptu sui. hoc solo sane superbus, quod laudes contemnit. Quid perversius, quidve indignius, quam ut humilitatis custos confessio superbiae militet, et inde velis videri melior, unde videris deterior? Mirabile jactantiae genus, ut non possis putari sanctus, si non appareas sceleratus. At talis confessio speciem habens humilitatis, non virtutem, non solum veniam non meretur, 1316 sed et provocat iram. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Ptolomey, *Almagesti* Prooemium (tr. Gerard of Cremona) (Venice: Petrus Liechtenstein, 1515 (fol. 1r): Qui inter sapientes est humilior est sapientior existit, sicut locus profundior magis abundat aquis aliis lacunis.

Cf. Karl Young, “Chaucer’s Aphorisms from Ptolemy” *Studies in Philology* Vol. 34, No. 1 (Jan. 1937), pp. 1-7: p. 4: (9) Qui inter sapientes humilior est, sapiencior existit, sicut locus profundior magis habundat aquis aliis lacunis. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Pliny, *Historia naturalis* 2.11.58 (LCL 330:206-207): sicut adfixas caelo solis fulgor interdiu non cerni, cum aeque ac noctu luceant, idque manifestum fiat defectu solis et praealtis puteis.

just as the sun’s radiance makes the fixed stars invisible in daytime, although they are shining as much as in the night, which becomes manifest at a solar eclipse and also when the star is reflected in a very deep well. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Jerome, cf. Pelagius, *Epistola* 1.20 (PL 30:34): fictam humilitatem fugiens, illam sectare quae vera est, quam Christus docuit, humilitatem, in qua non sit superbia inclusa. Multi enim hujus virtutis umbram, veritatem ejus sequuntur pauci. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Gregory, Dialogorum 1.5 (PL 77:180): Qualis enim quisque apud se lateat, contumelia illata probat.Nam sicut superbi honoribus, sic plerumque humiles sua despectione gratulantur. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelium* Tractatus 25.16 (PL 35:1604): Ut ergo causa omnium morborum curaretur, id est superbia, descendit et humilis factus est Filius Dei. Quid superbis, homo? Deus propter te humilis factus est. Puderet te fortasse imitari humilem hominem, saltem imitare humilem Deum. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Gregory, *Homilia in Evanglia* 1.7.4 (PL 76:1103): Si ergo sancti viri etiam cum agunt fortia, de semetipsis vilia sentiunt, quid in sua excusatione dicturi sunt qui sine opere virtutis intumescunt? [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Gregory, *Homilia in Evangelia* 1.7.4 (PL 76:1103): Qui enim sine humilitate virtutes congregat, in ventum pulverem portat. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Cf. Bernard, *De gradibus humilitatis et supbiae* 18.47 (PL 182:967): Gloriosa res humilitas, qua ipsa quoque superbia palliare se appetit, ne vilescat! [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 7.1 (8:16b-817a): Unde nota, quod tres sunt gradus humilitatis, sicut dicitur in *glossa super Mattheum* (3): primus est subesse majori, nec praeferre se aequali, et haec est sufficiens et necessaria; secundus gradus est subesse pari, nec se praeferre minori, nec velle prawferri, et est humilitas copiosa; tertius gradus est subesse minori, et nemini praeferri, et haec est humilitas excellens et perfecta. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)