

Quotes on Pride

by

Richard Baxter

The most self-denying humiliation is the nearest way to heaven, and the most self-exalting Pride is the surest and nearest way to hell.

Oh what a constant companion, what a tyrannical commander, what a sly and subtle insinuating enemy, is this sin of pride! It goes with men to the draper, the mercer, the tailor: 'it chooseth them their cloth, their trimming, and their fashion... But, alas! how frequently doth it go with us to our study, and there sit with us and do our work! How oft doth it choose our subject, and, more frequently still, our words and ornaments!... It polluteth rather than polisheth; and, under pretence of laudable ornaments, dishonoreth our sermons with childish gauds: as if a prince were to be decked in the habit of a stage-player, or a painted fool. It persuadeth us to paint the window, that it may dim the light.

Meet every thought of self-exalting with abhorrence, and give it no other entertainment in your souls then you would give the Devil himself, who is the Father of it. For casting down Christ will prove the casting down of your selves, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased.

Alas! what is it that we have to be proud of? Is it of our body? Why, is it not made of the like materials as the brutes; and must it not shortly be as loathsome and abominable as a carcass? Is it of our graces? Why, the more we are proud of them, the less we have to be proud of. When so much of the nature of grace consists in humility, it is a great absurdity to be proud of it. Is it of our knowledge and learning? Why, if we have any knowledge at all, we must needs know how much reason we have to be humble; and if we know more than others, we must know more reason than others to be humble.

Pride is a vice that ill beseems them that must lead men in such a humble way to heaven: let us, therefore, take heed, lest, when we have brought others thither, the gate should prove too strait for ourselves... 'Pride is born in heaven, but as if unmindful that the way from that

place is closed, it is impossible for it to return afterwards!’ God, that thrust out a proud angel, will not entertain there a proud preacher.

Humility cherisheth the fear of God, and makes us say, how shall we do this evil? or neglect this duty? But Self-conceitedness and Pride is blind and bold, and destroyeth in men’s apprehensions, the difference between things sacred and common, the holy and the unclean: It disposeth them to such an unreverent boldness with holy things, as usually ends in a profane contempt: so that such can at last despise holy Ordinances which they should live upon.

We must study humility, and preach humility; and must we not possess and practice humility? A proud preacher of humility is at least a self-condemning man. What a sad case is it, that so vile a sin is not more easily discerned by us, but many who are most proud, can blame it in others, and yet take no notice of it in themselves! The world takes notice of some among us, that they have aspiring minds, and seek for the highest room, and must be the rulers, and bear the sway wherever they come, or else there is no living or acting with them. In any consultations, they come not to search after truth, but to dictate to others, who, perhaps, are fit to teach them. In a word, they have such arrogant domineering spirits, that the world rings of it, and yet they will not see it in themselves!

You do not believe well, nor repent well, nor pray well, nor do any Christian duty well, if you be not more humble in and after it, then you were before. It’s a sad case for a man to preach himself and pray himself into hell, and to strengthen the bonds of sin and Satan by his devotions. And yet proud Devotions are as ready a way to this, as you can devise. If you read, or confer, or preach, or pray, with a mind that is lifted up, and glorieth in itself, you do but serve the Devil, with the name of God and his holy Ordinances.

It is Pride and Self-seeking to desire to set up ourselves in men’s esteem, and to endear ourselves for ourselves into their affections. It is God’s highest honour to be most highly esteemed and most dearly beloved, as being the most perfect and transcendent Good. And proud men in this world aspire to his Prerogative; and much affect to be beloved of all: and fain they would sit near men’s hearts, and be the darlings of the world.

There are many in Hell, and there will be for ever, that were greater men then you on earth. The higher you climb, the lower you have to fall. If the breath of a thousand applaud you now, perhaps a million may reproach you when you are dead? However, it is not the applause of men that will carry you to heaven, or abate the least of your pain in Hell. Glory not then in worldly honours or greatness. But rather rejoice that you have enough without all this in God.

It was fatal presumption for the highest angel to compare with his Creator. What is it then for a lump of dirt, an ignorant sot, that knoweth not himself, nor his own soul, that knoweth but little of the things which he seeth, yet that is more ignorant than many of his neighbours, to set himself against the wisdom of the Lord? It is one of the fullest discoveries of the horrible wickedness of carnal men, and the stark madness of such as sin, that so silly a mole dare contradict his Maker, and call in question the word of God.

SEE then that you abhor all self-advancing thoughts: And receive no Doctrine that gives the glory of Christ unto your selves. They are miserable that are made *irreligious* by their pride: But they are more miserable, because more incurable, that make themselves a *Religion* by their pride: and frame to themselves both Doctrines and Devotions, whose tendency and use is to keep alive this devilish sin.

When you are tempted to set too much by your credit, and to sin against God for the esteem of men, remember that Christ *made himself of no reputation, Phil. 2. 7*. And can your reputation be less than none?... Learn here of him, that all of us must learn of, how far to set by your honour in the world.

Repentance and this Pride are deadly foes. To be Penitent and Proud is to be Hot and Cold, alive and dead. Though Christ love not to find you in the dust of earthly-mindedness, yet he loves to find you in the dust of humility. The Publican that hanged down the head did sit the way better to the sight of God, than the self-conceited Pharisee.

Spiritual blindness hath this disadvantage, that whereas I can easily make any other blind man know that he is blind, and therefore be willing to be led or helped: here the more blind

men are, most commonly they are the more confident that they see...For Pride will not let them know their ignorance. The same light that cureth ignorance must reveal it.

One work of Pride is to climb higher into places of superiority and honour and command.... It is the Nature of selfishness to aspire after the highest exaltation in the world that can be attained... No man in their eyes is so fit as themselves, or so worthy as themselves.

Consider also that you have to do with so Holy and Glorious a God, that to be Proud before Him, and that in and of our very service of him, is a sin whose greatness surpasseth our apprehensions...: But to be Proud before the God of heaven, and that in and of our lamentably weak addresses to him, O what an horridly impious, unreasonable thing is this? O man, if thy eyes were opened to see a little, a very little of the glory of that blessed God thou speakest to, how flat wouldst thou fall down? how wouldst thou fear and tremble?

It is not possible that love to Christ should dwell or work in any but the humble, that feel at the heart that they are unworthy of love, and worthy of everlasting wrath. The Proud and Self conceited cannot love him; for they cannot be much taken with Christ's love to them, except as the Pharisee in a way of self-flattery.... It is not possible that love to Christ should dwell or work in any but the humble, that feel at the heart that they are unworthy of love, and worthy of everlasting wrath. The Proud and Self conceited cannot love him; for they cannot be much taken with Christ's love to them, except as the Pharisee in a way of self-flattery... But the full soul loathes the honey-comb. The self-conceited un-humbled sinner looks as mindlessly at Christ, as a healthful man at the Physician, or an innocent man at a pardon.

Why do you desire to be so fine, or neat, or excessive comely? Is it not to draw the eyes and observations of men upon you? and to what end? Is it not to be thought either Rich, or beautiful, or of a handsome person? And to what end desire you these thoughts of men? Do you not know that this desire is Pride itself? You must needs be somebody; and fain you would be observed and valued; and fain you would be noted to be of the best or highest rank, that you can expect to be reckoned of: And what is this but Pride? And I hope you

know that Pride is the Devils sin, the first born of all iniquity; and that which the God of heaven abhors!

Christ himself will not communicate himself to the proud and self-conceited. He is wisdom, but not to them that are wise in their own eyes already. He is Righteousness, but not to them that Justify themselves: He is Sanctification, but not to those that never found their own uncleanness. He is Redemption, but to none but those that feel themselves condemned. He hath the white raiment, and the treasures of grace and glory: but it's only those that penitently feel that they are poor and miserable, and blind, and naked.