

Symptoms of Bodily Pride

John Bunyan

(1628-1688)

WISEMAN: There are two sorts of pride: pride of spirit and pride of body. The first of these is thus made mention of in the Scriptures. "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD" (Pro. 16:5). "*An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin*" (Pro. 21:4). "*The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit*" (Ecc. 7:8). Bodily pride the Scriptures mention. "*In that day the Lord will take away the bravery¹ of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls², and their round tires³ like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers⁴, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets⁵, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles⁶, and the wimples⁷, and the crisping pins⁸, The glasses⁹, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails"* (Isa 3:18-23). By these expressions, it is evident that there is pride of body, as well as pride of spirit, and that both are sin, and so abominable to the Lord. But these texts Mr. Badman could never abide to read. They were to him as Micaiah was to Ahab: they never spake good of him, but evil (1Ki 22:6-18).

ATTENTIVE: I suppose that it was not Mr. Badman's case alone to malign¹⁰ those texts that speak against their vices. For I believe that most ungodly men, where the Scriptures are [concerned], have a secret

¹ Bravery – splendor; beauty.

² Cauls – headbands.

³ Round tires – crescent shaped ornaments.

⁴ Mufflers – veils or scarves.

⁵ Tablets – perfume boxes.

⁶ Mantles – outer tunics.

⁷ Wimples – shawls.

⁸ Crisping pins – instruments for curling hair; the Hebrew can mean "purse."

⁹ Glasses – Hand mirrors.

¹⁰ Malign – To regard with bitter dislike.

antipathy¹¹ against those words of God that do most plainly and fully rebuke them for their sins.

WISEMAN. That is out of doubt. And by that antipathy, they show that sin and Satan are more welcome to them than are wholesome instructions of life and godliness.

ATTEST. Well, but not to go off from our discourse of Mr. Badman, you say he was proud. But will you show me now some symptoms of one that is proud?

WISE. Yes, that I will. First, I will show you some symptoms of pride of heart. Pride of heart is seen by outward things, as pride of body in general is a sign of pride of heart; for all proud gestures of the body flow from pride of heart. Therefore Solomon saith, "*There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up*" (Pro 30:13). And again, there is "*that exalteth his gate,*" his going (Pro 17:19). Now, these lofty eyes and this exalting of the gate is a sign of a proud heart; for both these actions come from the heart. For out of the heart comes pride in all the visible appearances of it (Mar. 7:21-23).

But more particularly, 1. Heart pride is discovered by a stretched-out neck and by mincing¹² as they go. For the wicked, the proud, have a proud neck, a proud foot, a proud tongue, by which this their going is exalted. This is that which makes them look scornfully, speak ruggedly, and carry it huffingly¹³ among their neighbors. 2. A proud heart is a persecuting one. "*The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor*" (Psa. 10:2). 3. A prayerless man is a proud man (Psa. 10:4). 4. A contentious man is a proud man (Pro 13:10). 5. The disdainful¹⁴ man is a proud man (Psa. 119:51). 6. The man that oppresses his neighbor is a proud man (Psa. 119:122). 7. He that hearkeneth not to God's Word with reverence and fear is a proud man

¹¹ Antipathy – Hostile feeling toward.

¹² Mincing -

Οφ α περσον: Σπεακινγ, ωαλκινγ, ορ βεηαπινγ, ιν αν αφφεχτεδλψ δαιντυ ορ νιχε μαννερ.

¹³ Huffingly – arrogantly.

(Jer. 13:15, 17). 8. And he that calls the proud happy is, be sure, a proud man. All these are proud in heart, and this their pride of heart doth thus discover itself (Jer. 43:2; Mal. 3:15).

As to bodily pride, it is discovered—that is, something of it—by all the particulars mentioned before. For though they are said to be symptoms of pride of heart, yet they are symptoms of that pride by their showing of themselves in the body. You know diseases that are within are seen oftentimes by outward and visible signs, yet by these very signs even the outside is defiled also. So all those visible signs of heart pride are signs of bodily pride also.

But to come to more outward signs. The putting on of gold, pearls, and costly array; the plaiting of the hair, the following of fashions, the seeking by gestures to imitate the proud, either by speech, looks, dresses, goings, or other fools' baubles¹⁴, of which at this time the world is full. All these and many more are signs of a proud heart, so of bodily pride also (1Ti. 2:9; 1Pe. 3:3-5).

But Mr. Badman would not allow by any means that this should be called pride, but rather neatness, handsomeness, comeliness, cleanliness, etc. Neither would he allow that following of fashions was anything else, but because he would not be proud, singular, and esteemed fantastical¹⁵ by his neighbors.

ATTEST. But I have been told that when some have been rebuked for their pride, they have turned it again upon the brotherhood of those by whom they have been rebuked, saying, "Physician, heal thy friends! Look at home among your brotherhood, even among the wisest of you, and see if you yourselves are clear, even you professors. For who is prouder than you professors? scarcely the devil himself!"

¹⁴ Bauble – a showy trinket or ornament such as would please a child.

¹⁵ Fantastical – Bizarre.

WISE. My heart aches at this answer because there is too much cause for it. This very answer would Mr. Badman give his wife when she, as she would sometimes, reprove him for his pride. "We shall have," says he, "great amendments in living now, for the devil is turned a corrector of vice!" "For no sin reigneth more in the world," quoth he, "than pride among professors." And who can contradict him? Let us give the devil his due: the thing is too apparent for any man to deny. And I doubt not but the same answer is ready in the mouths of Mr. Badman's friends; for they may and do see pride display itself in the apparel and carriages of professors—one may say—almost as much as among any people in the land; the more is the pity. Ay, and I fear that even their extravagancies in this hath hardened the heart of many a one, as I perceive it did somewhat the heart of Mr. Badman himself. For my own part, I have seen many myself—and those church members too—so decked and bedaubed¹⁶ with their fangles and toys¹⁷ that when they have been at the solemn appointments of God in the way of His worship, I have wondered with what face such painted persons could sit in the place where they were without swooning. But certainly, the holiness of God and the pollution of themselves by sin must need be very far out of the minds of such people, what profession soever they make.

I have read of a whore's forehead, and I have read of Christian shamefacedness (Jer. 3:3; 1Ti. 2:9). I have read of costly array and of that which becometh women professing godliness—with good works (1Pe. 3:1-3). But if I might speak, I know what I know and could say, and yet do no wrong, that which would make some professors stink in their places; but now I forbear (Jer. 23:15).

ATTENT. Sir, you seem greatly concerned at this, but what if I shall say more? It is whispered that some good ministers have countenanced their people in their light and wanton apparel, yea, have pleaded for their gold and pearls, and costly array, etc.

¹⁶ Bedaubed – covered with showy dress or ornaments in a coarse, tasteless manner.

¹⁷ Fangles and toys – New fashions and trinkets.

WISE. I know not what they have pleaded for, but it is easily seen that they tolerate, or at leastwise, wink and connive¹⁸ at such things both in their wives and children. And so "*from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land*" (Jer. 23:15). When the hand of the rulers are chief in a trespass, who can keep their people from being drowned in that trespass? (Ezr. 9:2).

ATTENT. This is a lamentation and must stand for a lamentation.

WISE. So it is, and so it must. And I will add, it is a shame, it is a reproach, it is a stumbling block to the blind! For though men be as blind as Mr. Badman himself, yet they can see the foolish lightness that must needs be the bottom of all these apish and wanton extravagancies. But many have their excuses ready, [namely], their parents, their husbands, and their breeding calls for it and the like...But all these will be but the spider's web when the thunder of the Word of the great God shall rattle from heaven against them—as it will at death or judgment. But I wish it might do it before. Alas! These excuses are but bare pretenses: these proud ones love to have it so. I once talked with a maid by way of reproof for her fond and gaudy garment. But she told me, "The tailor would make it so," when alas! Poor, proud girl: she gave order to the tailor so to make it. Many make parents, husbands, and tailors, etc., the blind to others; but their naughty hearts and their giving of way thereto is the original cause of all these evils.

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¹⁸ Wink and Connive – Shut one's eyes to the faults of.