

Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne about the stars of God, I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?"

Mark how God addresses him, describing Hell itself as being astonished at his fall, seeing that he had mounted so high; and yet declaring assuredly that his light and greatness were nothing to the Almighty, that he would pull him down, even though, like an eagle, he had built his nest among the stars. I say there is nothing more eloquently condemned in Scripture than pride; and yet there is no trap into which we poor silly birds so easily flee, no pitfall into which, like foolish beasts of the earth, we so continually run.

On the other hand, humility is a grace that hath many promises given to it in the Scripture. Perhaps most promises are given to faith, and love is often considered to be the brightest of the train of virtues; yet humility holds by no means an inferior place in God's Word, and there hundreds of promises linked to it. Every grace seems to be like a nail, on which precious blessings hang, and humility hath many a mercy suspended from it. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" "blessed are the poor in spirit;" and in multitudes of other passages we are reminded that God loveth the humble, but that he "bringeth down the mighty from their seats and exalteth the humble and meek."

"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty." I. Pride, what is it? II. Pride, where is its seat? The heart of man. III. Pride, what is its consequence? Destruction.

1. In the first place I must try to describe pride to you. I might point it as being the worst malformation of all the monstrous things in creation. It hath nothing in it, nothing in proportion; but everything in disorder. It is altogether the reverse of the creatures which God hath made, which are pure and holy. Pride, the first born son of Hell, is indeed like its parent, all unclean and vile, and in it there is neither form, fashion, nor comeliness.

1. In the first place, pride is a groundless thing. It standeth on the sands, or, worse than that, it puts its foot on the billows, which yield beneath its tread; or, worse still, it stands on bubbles, which soon must burst beneath its feet. Of all things, pride has the worst foothold. It has no solid rock on earth whereon to place itself. We have reasons for almost everything, but we have no reasons for pride. Pride is a thing which should be unnatural to us, for we have nothing to be proud of. What is there in man of which he should glory?

Our very reason is enough to humble us.

What are we but creatures of to-day? Our frailty should be sufficient to lay us low, for we shall be gone to-morrow. Our ignorance should tend to keep pride from our lips. What are we, but like the wild ass's colt which knoweth nothing? And our sins ought effectually to stop our mouths and lay us in the dust. Of all things in the world, pride toward God is that which hath the very least excuse. It hath neither stick nor stone whereon to build. Yet, like the spider, it carrieth its own web in its bowels, and can of itself spin that werewith to catch its prey. It seems to stand upon itself.