

Quotes on Christian Living

by

Richard Baxter

While you are as lights set upon a hill, think not to lie hid. Take heed therefore to yourselves, and do your work as those that remember that the world looks on them, and that with the quick-sighted eye of malice, ready to make the worst of all, to find the smallest fault where it is, to aggravate it where they find it, to divulge it and to take advantage of it to their own designs, and to make faults where they cannot find them. How cautiously, then, should we walk before so many ill-minded observers!

Is God or the world, Heaven or earth, thus highly esteemed by you? Let your Practise shew it.

Let the blinded worldling glory that he hath the world; but do you glory that you need it not, and can be without it, and are heirs of a better world. Let sensual wretches glory in the pleasing of their flesh; but do you glory that you are able to deny it its desires, and to please your Lord. Let the deluded ambitious ones glory in their honours; but teach you to pity them in the height of their prosperity, and glory in the durable prerogatives of the Saints. Let natural men glory in their health and natural Life: but glory you in a readiness to die and be with Christ, and in the Believing expectations of the Life everlasting. Let hypocrites glory in their evading of sufferings: But do you glory in tribulations and infirmities, and that you are accounted worthy to suffer for Christ.

Men would sooner believe that the gospel is from heaven, if they saw more such effects of it upon the hearts and lives of those who profess it. The world is better able to read the nature of religion in a man's life than in the Bible.

Right Opinions in Religion are so unlikely to save a man that crosseth them in his practise, that such shall be beaten with many stripes.... Christianity is a practical Religion: It is a devoted seeking for another life, by the improvement and contempt of this: Put not that into your Life that you are ashamed to put into your Profession or Belief.

The company which you love, shews what courses you love, and what you are. You delight in the company of those that Christ will judge as his enemies: and how then will he judge of you? You delight most in the company of those notorious fools, that know not the plainest and needfullest things in all the world: that know not that God is better than the world, and holiness than sin; and know not the way of their own salvation. If you are content to have the company of the ungodly for ever, you may take it here. But if you would not dwell in hell with them, do not go on in sin with them.

And is it possible for a man to be a Christian indeed that so far mistaketh the very Nature and Ends of Christianity itself? It is not possible... for any man to feign a Christianity to himself that excludeth Mortification, or is separable from it, in a capable subject.

We must have a special eye upon families... The life of religion, and the welfare and glory of both the Church and the State, depend much on family government and duty. If we suffer the neglect of this, we shall undo all.

It was the work of man to do his Makers will, and he was to use nothing but with this intention. But when man was fallen from God to himself, he afterwards used all things for himself, even his carnal self; and all that he possessed was become the provision and fuel of his lusts; and so the whole creation which he was capable of using, was abused by him to this low and selfish end, as if all things had been made but for his delight and will. But when man is brought to Deny himself, he is brought to restore the Creatures to their former use, and not to sacrifice them to his fleshly mind; so that all that he hath and useth in the world, is used to another end (so far as he denyeth himself) than formerly it was; even for God and not himself.

This vanity of apparel is the certain effect of the vanity of your mind: you openly proclaim your selves to be persons of a foolish, childish temper, and poor understanding.... Those that have no inward worth to commend them to the world, are silly souls indeed, if they think any wise folks will take a silken coat instead of it? It is wisdom, and holiness and righteousness that are the ornaments of man; and that's his beauty which beautifieth his

soul. And do you think that among wise men fine clothes will go instead of wisdom, or virtue, or holiness?

You see that there are a people that seek more diligently after Heaven than Earth... You see that there are a people that seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness... which showeth that they have chosen the better part.... And you see that there is a people that can let go the things of the world when God calls for them... That will rather suffer in body or estate, even the loss of all, (*than*) wilfully sin against God, and hazard his favour... You have read or heard of multitudes that have suffered Martyrdom for Christ... All these examples, together with the frequent affirmations of the Scriptures, may assure you that thus it is with true Christians. The world is Crucified to them, and they to the world.

Reformation is to many of us, as the Messiah was to the Jews. Before he came, they looked and longed for him, and boasted of him, and rejoiced in hope of him; but when he came they could not abide him, but hated him, and would not believe that he was indeed the person, and therefore persecuted and put him to death, to the curse and confusion of the main body of their nation... And the reason was, because it was another manner of Christ that the Jews expected; it was one who would bring them riches and liberty, and to this day they profess that they will never believe in any but such. So it is with too many about reformation. They hoped for a reformation that would bring them more wealth and honour with the people, and power to force men to do what they would have them: and now they see a reformation that must put them to more condescension and pains than they were ever at before... O how many carnal expectations are here crossed!

You are not like to see any general reformation, till you procure family reformation. Some little religion there may be, here and there; but while it is confined to single persons, and is not promoted in families, it will not prosper, nor promise much future increase.

Should your flesh be pleased before your Maker? Will you displease the Lord, and displease your teachers, and your godly friends, and all to please your brutish appetites, or sensual desires? Is not God worthy to be the ruler of your flesh? If he shall not rule it, he will not save it; you cannot in reason expect that he should.

A man may step out of one path into another, and yet have his face the same way, and be still going towards the same place: But it is another matter to turn quite back again, and take his journey the contrary way, to a contrary place. So it is here: a man may turn from drunkenness to thriftiness, and forsake his good fellowship, and other gross disgraceful sins, and set upon some duties of religion, and yet be still going to the same end as before, intending his carnal self above all, and giving it still the government of his soul. But, when he is converted, this self is denied and taken down, and God is set up, and his face is turned the contrary way; and he, that before was addicted to himself, and lived to himself, is now by sanctification devoted to God, and liveth unto God. Before, he asked himself what he should do with his time, his parts, and his estate, and for himself he used them; but now he asketh God what he shall do with them, and useth them for him.

You little value success, indeed, that will sell it at so cheap a rate, or will not do so small a matter to attain it. It is a palpable error of some ministers, who make such a disproportion between their preaching and their living; who study hard to preach exactly, and study little or not at all to live exactly. All the week long is little enough, to study how to speak two hours; and yet one hour seems too much to study how to live all the week.

We must study as hard how to live well, as how to preach well. We must think and think again, how to compose our lives, as may most tend to men's salvation, as well as our sermons.

Maintain your innocency, and walk without offense. Let your lives condemn sin, and persuade men to duty. Would you have your people more careful of their souls, than you are of yours? If you would have them redeem their time, do not you misspend yours.

See whether this be not the great and lamentable sin of the ministers of the gospel, that they be not fully devoted to God, and give not up themselves, and all that they have, to the carrying on of the blessed work which they have undertaken; and whether flesh-pleasing, and self-seeking, and an interest distinct from that of Christ, do not make us neglect much of our duty, and serve God in the cheapest and most applauded part of his work, and withdraw from that which would subject us to cost and sufferings? And whether this do not

show, that too many of us are earthly that seem to be heavenly, and mind the things below, while they preach the things above, and idolize the world while they call men to condemn it? What is it but hypocrisy to shrink from sufferings, and to take up none but safe and easy works, and make ourselves believe that the rest are no duties?... This makes the ministerial work so unfaithfully executed, because it is so carnally undertaken; men enter upon it as a life of ease, and honour, and respectability, and they resolve to attain their ends, and have what they expected by right or wrong. They looked not for hatred and suffering, and they will avoid it, though by the avoiding of their work.