

Quotes on Death

by

Richard Baxter

O that you could but see what haste death makes, tho' yet he hath not overtaken you! No post so swift! No messenger more sure! As sure as the sun will be with you in the morning, though it hath many thousand and hundred thousand miles to go in the night, so sure will death be quickly with you; and then where is your sport and pleasure? Then will you jest and brave it out? Then will you jeer at them that warned you? Then is it better to be a believing saint or a sensual worldling?

When you are dying, that one thing that had your heart, will more torment your hearts to remember it, then all things else will do. Nothing is such a terror to the thoughts of a dying covetous man, as his money, and lands, and worldly wealth: Nothing so vexeth the ambitious, as to think on that shadow of honour which he did pursue: Nothing doth so torment the filthy fornicator, as the remembrance of that person with whom he committed the beastly sin. All other persons or things in the world will not then be so bitter to you, as those that stole your hearts from God: but at judgement and in hell the remembrance of them will be a thousand fold more bitter.

Your inordinate love of anything in the world will not only embitter your lives, but it will be the horror of your souls at death and judgement. And therefore as ever you would leave the world in peace, and as ever you would appear before the Lord your Judge with comfort and as ever you desire that the creatures should not be your Tormentors, take heed that you do not over-love them now, but see that they be Crucified to you. You cannot possibly be sensible now, what a pang of horror it will cast you into at the last, when you shall see the world leaving you, and see what it was that you ventured your souls and their everlasting welfare for. O with what grief and tearing of heart do earthly minded persons part with the world?

Whenever you have several ways before you; for the laying out of your money or your time, let the Question be seriously put to your heart, which of these ways shall I wish at death and judgement that I had expended it? And let that be chosen as the way.

Have you dignities, and honours, and high places in the world? Do others bow to you, and have you power to crush them or exalt them at your pleasure? Glory not in it as any part of your felicity. A horse is stronger then a man: The great Mogul, and the Turkish Emperor, and many another Infidel Prince, is a thousand fold beyond the greatest of you, in Power and earthly dignity: and yet what are they but miserable wretches! Your power will not conquer death, nor keep off sickness, nor keep the stoutest of your Carcasses from corruption. When a man shall see you gasping for breath, and yielding your selves prisoners to irresistible death; and closing those eyes that look so haughtily, then who can discern the Glory of your greatness? Who then will fear you, or honour or regard you, further then your deserts or their interests lead them? Your flatterers will then forsake you, and seek them a new Master?

Consider frequently of how little moment these things are as to you. You have matters of everlasting life or death, salvation or damnation to look after; and what is riches or vain pleasures to this? These are not the things that must denominate you happy or unhappy... Should a man that must be for ever in Heaven or Hell, and hath but a little time to determine which it must be, should such a man spend that little time about riches and pleasure? Can you have while at the door of Eternity to hunt after the delights of the flesh, and study after the prosperity of this world? Why do not dying men do so then?

Mortality is the disgrace of all sublunary delights. How it spoils our pleasure to see it dying in our hands!.. O my soul, let go thy dreams of present pleasure, and loose thy hold of earth and flesh. Study frequently, study thoroughly this one word—eternity...This word, everlasting, contains the perfection of their torment and our glory. O that the sinner would study this word; methinks it would startle him out of his dead sleep! O that the gracious soul would study it; methinks it would revive him in his deepest agony!

Then stand to thy old opinions and contemptuous thoughts of the diligence of the saints; make ready now thy strongest reasons, and stand up then before the Judge, and plead like a man for thy fleshly, thy worldly, and ungodly life. But know that thou wilt have One to plead with, that will not be outfaced by thee; nor so easily put off as we thy fellow-creatures. O poor soul! there is nothing but a slender veil of flesh between thee and that amazing sight, which will quickly silence thee, and turn thy tone, and make thee of another mind!