

Quotes on False Christians

by

Richard Baxter

Let me tell you more; that many persons, that avoid disgraceful sins are as fast glued to the world, and as much slaves to the flesh, and as strange to God, and averse to heaven in their more civil discourse, as others are in their more shameful and notorious sins.

Nowhere can almost a faithful minister set up the unquestionable discipline of Christ, or put back the most scandalous impenitent sinners from the communion of the church and participation of the sacraments, but the most of the people rail at them and revile them; as if these ignorant careless souls were wiser than their teachers, or than God himself...they are the obstinate enemies of light and grace, and will not be brought by the calls of God to see their folly, and know what is for their good.

The main End of every upright Christian is to please and enjoy God: and the main End of all the rest of the world is how to please their carnal minds in the enjoyment of some earthly things. If you could but discern which of these is your chiefest End, you might discern whether it be Christ or the world that Liveth in you. For Christ liveth in you, when he is your End, and the world Liveth in you when it is your End.

Every man and woman on earth, that takes themselves for true Christians, and yet do not deny themselves, even life and all for the sake of Christ and the hope of everlasting glory, are mere self-deceivers, and no true Christians at all. He that will save his life, saith Christ, shall lose it.

I must deal plainly with you, in hope of your recovery, or at least of the discharge of my own soul. I confess to you, I look upon a worldly Prince, or Judge, or Justice, or Gentleman, or Freeholder yea or Minister, as men as wicked before God, and in as damnable and dangerous a case to their own souls, as the thieves that you burn in the hand and hang. I am far from extenuating *their* sin or misery: but I am shewing you your own. Your sin may be as deep rooted, and the interest of the world may be more predominant in you, then in them.

Your lands, and houses, and hopeful posterity, and the other provisions that you have made for your flesh, may have more of your hearts, then the world hath of the heart of a poor prisoner that never had so much to Idolize. Believe it Gentlemen; Christ was not in jest, when he so often and earnestly warneth men of your quality of their everlasting peril.

Is the company of those sinners, better than the company of God, and his favour? were it not better to be that while with him in prayer, or about his work? If you love a tippling fellow better than God, speak out, and say so plainly, and never dissemble any more, nor say that you love God above all, or that you are Christians. Have you more delight in the Company of them that would entice to sin, than in the Company of the godly that would draw you from it? This is a most certain mark, that yet you are the children of the Devil, and in a state of damnation. It is not possible for a sanctified child of God to do so.

Sirs, the abstaining from some of these crimes, and living like Civil Religious men, if the world be not crucified to you and you to it, doth but hide your sin and misery, and hinder your shame and repentance, but not prevent your damnation. Nay the very Interest of the flesh itself may make you forbear disgraceful sins; and so that may be finally your greater vice, which you so much glory in, and which is materially your duty. All the privilege of your condition is, that you shall serve the Devil in more Golden setters, then the poorer and contemned fort of sinners; and that you may be the children of wrath with less suspicion; and that you may go to Hell in more credit than the rest; and by your self-deceit, you may keep off the knowledge of your misery, and the disquiet of soul that would follow thereupon; till death make you wiser when it is too late. And is this a benefit to rejoice in?

Can you but tell me what is the main Design of your Life? Whether it be for Earth or Heaven... A worldling may speak contemptuously of the world, and speak most honourably of God and the Life to come: But speculative knowledge and practical are frequently contradictory in the same man. Still it is this world that hath his chief Intentions, and is the End of his designs and life; and the world to come is regarded but as a reserve, because of their unavoidable separation from this world.

It's one thing to take God and heaven for your portion, as Believers do; and another thing to be desirous of it as a reserve when you can keep the world no longer... It's one thing to lay up your Treasure and Hopes in heaven, and to seek it first; and another thing to be contented with it in your Necessity, and to seek the world before it, and give God that the flesh can spare.

If it be an offence to wrong man, what is it to wrong God? and if you may not be slothful in the work of a man, what a crime is it to be slothful in the work of the God of Heaven? The greater your Master is, the more heinous it is to be lazy in his service.

Do not think that you shall abuse your Maker and Redeemer, and serve his enemies, and debase your souls, and trouble the world, and wrong the church, and reproach the godly, and grieve your teachers, and hinder reformation, and all this upon free cost. You know not yet what this must cost you, but you must shortly know, when the righteous God shall take you in hand...unless you prevent the everlasting torments by a sound conversion, and a speedy obeying of the call of God.

It undoes many thousands that they think they are in the way to salvation when they are not; and thinking that they are converted, when it is no such thing. And then, when we call to them to turn, they go away as they came, and think that this concerns not them; for they are turned already.

A selfish carnal person is serving himself even in Preaching, and hearing, and praying, and Sacraments, and other acts of worship and Church-communion: Much more in the common business of his life. Even when he thinks he is serving God, he is but serving himself of God, and provoking God by this abuse: when he thinks he is very holy because of his services, he is doubly unholy, in that he even profaneth holy things. And as it is not God indeed that he serveth, so from God he must not expect a Reward.

Whence is it but for want of self-denial, that there is such scrambling for Rule and Greatness, for Riches and Honours among all? As if they thought it more desirable to fall from a high place than a low! and at death to part with Riches than with Poverty! and at

Judgement to have much to answer for, than little! and to go to Heaven as a Camel through a needles eye, than by the more plain and easy way!

Wherever the Interest of Carnal self is stronger and more predominant habitually than the Interest of God, of Christ, of everlasting life, there is no true self-denial or saving grace: But where God's Interest is the strongest, there self-denial is sincere.

If you have true Self-denial, there is nothing in this world so dear to you, but on deliberation you would leave it for God. He that hath anything which he loveth so well that he cannot spare it for God, is a selfish and unsanctified wretch.

You that bark at preachers of the gospel, for desiring to keep you out of hell, and say that they preach despair, tell me, if you can, when did you ever hear any sober man say, that there is no hope for you, tho' you repent and be converted? No, it is the contrary that we proclaim from the Lord; and, whoever is born again, and by faith and repentance doth become a new creature, shall certainly be saved.