

Quotes on Money

by

Richard Baxter

Remember that you have not one penny or pennies worth in the world, but what you had from God, and must be accountable to God for; and must employ with an eye upon his will, and your salvation. I do not call you to cast away your Riches, but to see that you use all that ever you have, as will be most comfortable to you in your last review.

If you gather *Riches for your selves*, you are standing pits: If you are Rich to God, you will be running springs, or cisterns. There is a blessed Art of sending all your Riches to Heaven before you, if you could learn it, and were willing to be happy at those rates... *the fault is not in Riches, but in them that know not how to use them.*

If it was so deadly a sin in Simon Magus to offer to buy the gift of God with money, what is it to sell his gift, his cause, and the souls of men for money? And what reason have we to fear, lest our money perish with us!

A man that preacheth an immortal crown should not seek much after transitory vanity. And he that preacheth the contempt of riches should himself contemn them and show it by his life. And he that preacheth self-denial and mortification should practice these virtues in the eyes of them to whom he preacheth, if he would have his doctrine believed.

Temporal crowns and kingdoms could not make a rest for saints. As they were not redeemed with so low a price, neither are they endued with so low a nature.

Why should a covetous Miser pinch his flesh more to gather Riches for himself and his posterity, then you should do to gather it for God, and to expend it on the Church and poor? Be as frugal as they; but not to the same end; so you use it for God and your poor Brethren, an honest parsimony and gathering is a duty; and such an holy covetousness is so far from condemnable, that it is the truest Charity, which God and all wise men will most applaud.

Our journey is not of such small moment nor our way so fair, nor our day so long nor our strength and patience so great, as to encourage us to load ourselves with things unnecessary. Christian living is daily sighting; and we use not to fight with our Riches on our backs, but for them. He that swimmeth with the greatest load is likeliest to sink.

Too many I have known, that have wounded conscience and sold their souls for the love of Prosperity and Wealth; but none that ever did it for Poverty... For my own part, I bless God that hath kept me from greatness in the world, and I take it as the principal act of Friendship that ever you did for me.

Think not that your Riches are given you to fulfil the least inordinate desire of the flesh: Or that you may take ever the more sensual ease or pleasure, if you had all the world... deny your flesh as much as if you had but food and raiment. If you have much, give the more, and use the more, but enjoy never the more; and let not your sensual desires find ever the more provision: A rich man that is wise, and a faithful Steward; may live in as much self-denial, and labour as hard, and humble his flesh as much, as he hat hath but his daily bread. God sent you not provision for his enemy: All that is made the food of sin, or that doth not help you up to God, is employed contrary to the end that you received it for.

When men forsake Christ for fear of suffering, and because they will not forsake the world, they do but shew the effects of that disease, which they had caught long before. When the world pleased them they fell so deep in love with it, that now they will venture their souls to keep it. It is prosperity that *breeds* the disease, though adversity *shew* it. Love not the world and you will easily part with it, and so will easily suffer for Christ: And prosperity is liker to entice your Love to it, then adversity. This is a great reason why worldly Prosperity and true Holiness do so seldom go together: and so few of the great ones of the world are saved.

If covetousness be idolatry, and the sin of those with whom we may not so much as eat, and if the covetous shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven, and be such as the Holy Ghost doth join with thieves and the vilest sinners, who then but an Infidel can think that it is not a scandalous sin, and such as will be the damnation of all that be not thoroughly cured of it?

How unlike are you to Jesus Christ your pattern, that denied himself all the Honours, and Riches, and Carnal delights of the world. Read over his Life, and Read your own, and judge whether any man on earth, be more unlike to Christ, then a voluptuous, worldly Gentleman?

You see that all your wealth and honour will not preserve your Honourable Corpse from loathsome putrefaction. How much less will it keep your guilty souls, from the place that you have here been purchasing by your Mammon?... *For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, (or scraped together, as the Hebrew may be turned) when God shall take (or pull) away his soul? Job 27v 8.*

What a stir do poor men make to be rich, or to live in some content to the flesh, and what a stir do rich men make to be richer, or to keep that they have; and yet have they the face to pretend that they are crucified to the world?... Wretched Hypocrites!

If you are worldly or covetous, you are certainly wicked and abhorred by God, how highly so ever you may be esteemed of men... If yet you think I use you unmannerly in speaking so hardly of you, hear the Holy Ghost a little further, *Jam. 5. 1. Go to now ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten, your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire, ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.*

(A fool) is one that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not Rich towards God; as all the sanctified are. The difference lyeth in the matter, and end, or use of his riches. The worldling layeth up earthly treasure, the sanctified man layeth up a treasure in heaven with God: The worldling is rich for himself, and all that he parteth with for God's service or the poor, is but the leavings of the flesh and that which it can spare, when its own desires are satisfied, (for so much an Epicure may part with to good uses:) But the sanctified doth employ his riches for God, as being Rich to him, and not to his Carnal self.

Because you presume to call it folly, to part with all at Christ's command, tell me, *Whether is God or you the wiser, and whose judgement is fittest to determine which is the wisest way?* Who are like to be the fools indeed? those that you call so, or that God calleth so?

If you will save your selves, you will undo your selves; and if you will keep your Riches or Honours, you do but cast them away: For all is lost that is saved from God: and that is best saved that is lost for God.

And what doth worldly greatness add to your real worth in the eyes of God or of wise men? Riches are a gift which he (*God*) giveth even to his enemies and to those that must perish for ever; and few that have them come to heaven. But Holiness is a gift which he giveth to none but his beloved, and is the beginning of eternal life. Which then should be most honoured? What self-seeking and unprofitable servants are they? They will confess that they have all from God, and that all is due to him again: but it is but a self-condemning Confession. How many charitable and pious uses do call aloud for much of their estates? But how little of it is so expended. Now and then two pence or a groat to the poor is a great matter with them and the wealthy can come off with the quantity of the widow's mite. Let God call, and Ministers call, and the poor call and cry for it, all cannot extort their Idol out of their purses: So fast do they hold their money, that scarce anything but thieves, or soldiers, or death can wring it out of their hands. But so loose do they hold spiritual good which they seem to mind, that if a Seducer cannot easily tice them from it, or a derision shame them from it, yet at least a good bargain for the world can hire them from it, and the frowns of men in power, or the change of the times can affright them from it.

Some Rich men sacrifice all they have to their Bellies which are their gods, even to an epicurean momentary delight; and cast all into the filthy sink of their sensuality: These are worse than Infidels, defrauding their posterity; and swine alive, but worse than swine when they are dead. Some Rich men are provident, but it's only for their posterity. The ravenous bruits are greedy for their young. Some will begin to be bountiful at death, and give that to God which they can keep no longer, as if he would be thus bribed to receive their souls, and forgive their worldly hearts and lives. Some will give in their life time; but it is but part of their sinful gains; like the Thief that would pay Tithes of all that he had stolen.

Are you tempted to set by the riches and full provision or possessions of the world? Remember how Christ set by them; when he might have had all things, and refused to have a place to lay his head... And the best of his servants have followed him in this course, to whom he would have given more of the world, if he had seen it best for them.

The life of a worldling is but like a Poppet-play, where there is great doings to little purpose: Or like the busy gadding of the laborious Ants, to gather together a little sticks and straw, which the spurn of a man's foot will soon disperse. Thus do all worldly sensual men, walk in a *vain show*.