

Quotes on Prosperity

by

Richard Baxter

See then that you be not eager for prosperity; and if God cast it on you, use it with fear. And if ever you feel the creature begin to grow too sweet and delightful to you, then spit it out as the poison of the soul, and presently take a mortifying antidote before you are past remedy. As you feel the working of poison by its burning, or griping, or other effects agreeable to its nature, by which it seeketh the extinguishing of life; so you may feel when the world is poison to your souls, by its creeping into your affections, and insinuating into your hearts with present delight, or future hopes; by seeming more Lovely and more Necessary then it is. As soon as ever you feel it thus creep into your hearts, it's time to rise up against it with holy fear, and to cast it out, if you love your souls.

Prosperity doth powerfully corrupt the mind: It breedeth many dangerous errors, and vices; and it maketh useless that knowledge which men have: so that though such men can speak the same words as another, about the matters of the life to come, it is but dreamingly, and without life. Their Knowledge hath but little power on their hearts and lives. The world is so great with them, which is as nothing that God and everlasting life are as nothing to them which are all. They are so full of the creature that they have no room for Christ: and so busy about Earth, that they have but little time for Heaven: and taste so much sweetness in their present pomp, that they cannot relish the true and durable delights.

Prosperity and true Holiness do so seldom go together.

Bethink you how unsuitable it is to your condition, to desire sumptuous buildings, and enticing accommodations to your flesh. Have you not taken God for your portion and Heaven for your home? and are you not strangers and pilgrims here? and is not God and everlasting glory sufficient for you? You profess all this, if you profess to be Christians: and if you be not, you should not profess that you are. And what! do you begin to repent of your choice? must you yet turn to the pomp and vanity of the world again?

He never studied God and Heaven; nor his own heart, that knoweth not that it is a very difficult thing, to have a heavenly mind in earthly prosperity, and to live in the desires of another world, while we feel all seem to go well with us in this. How hard to be weaned from the world, till we suffer in it; yea till we are plunged into an utter despair, of ever receiving here the satisfaction of our desires.

Prosperity usually breedeth a tenderness and sickly frame of soul, so that we can scarce look out of door, but our affections take cold; and can scarce feed on the most wholesome food, but we receive it with some loathing, or turn it to the matter of some disease. But to worldly vanities, it breeds a Canine appetite: so that ambitious wretches are like Dogs that greedily swallow the morsel that you cast them, and presently gape for more. But wholesome poverty hardeneth us against such tenderness and infirmities, and breedeth not such diseases in the soul.

Think not too highly of a prosperous state. Judge not of it as it accommodateth the flesh, but as it either helps or hinders you for God and heaven: And then you'll perceive that it is a heavy charge and burden to the best, if not a dangerous temptation. O if you knew but how dear the most do pay for their prosperity, you would pity them, and have lower thoughts of prosperity.

If you fear being a loser by God, you may keep your Riches as long as you can, and try how you can save yourself and them. A man's life consisteth not in the abundance that he possesseth.

When Prosperity is given you by God, then above all take heed how you use it... When the flesh would be pleased and lifted up, whether with delicious meats and drinks, or carnal pomp, applause or ostentation, or by sports, or idleness, or any other sensual delight, deny it these desires, as much as if you had no riches, and use nothing but for health and the service of God; and tell the flesh, 'It was not for thee, to the pleasing of thy desires, that God hath prospered me, but it was for his own more blessed ends; and therefore I will not serve or please thee by my prosperity, but him that gave it me'.

Will not a mean habitation, and shorter accommodations serve you for so short a time? Stay but a while, and your souls shall have house-room enough in heaven or hell, and a narrow grave of seven foot long will serve your bodies till the resurrection. And cannot you make shift with an ordinary habitation and with small & common things till then? Naked you came into the world, and naked you must go out: make not then so great a stir in dressing, and undressing, and feathering a nest, that will be so soon pulled down.

Prosperity is as strong a trial to many as suffering for Christ; O how eager is the flesh upon this bait; and how close doth it cleave to what it doth attain! See then that in this you deny your selves: Not in refusing Prosperity when God bestows it on you; but in refusing the sensual Delights which it affordeth the flesh to satisfy its lust.