

Quotes on Salvation

by

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But if it be, that you do not suffer eternal damnation, you have a great work to do before you die. It ordinarily is a very difficult work, especially to those who have gone on for a considerable time in ways of wickedness under the means of grace. If you are ever truly converted, you must be convinced of your misery and unworthiness; you must be guilty in your own sense. Begin your work, then, and seek to be made sensible of your misery and unworthiness. Make haste, and set about this work speedily.

To exhort those, who have some convictions of sin and danger, that they do not lose them. If you have the strivings of God's Spirit, God has met with you, led you to reflect upon your sins, and sensible that you are in danger of hell; and so made you concerned about your soul, and put you upon seeking salvation. Take heed that you do not lose your convictions, and grow senseless of eternal things, and negligent of your soul's concern, that you do not return to your former careless way of living, that you do not return to your former sins.

If you are fully come to a determination concerning the things of religion, that they are true, they will be of weight with you above all things in the world. If you be really convinced that these things are no fable, but reality, it is impossible but that you must be influenced by them above all things in the world.

It is the work of seeking salvation in a way of constant observance of all the duty to which God directs us in his word. If we would be saved, we must seek salvation. For although men do not obtain heaven of themselves; they do not go thither accidentally, or without any intention or endeavours of their own. God, in his word, hath directed men to seek their salvation as they would hope to obtain it. There is a race that is set before them, which they must run, and in that race come off victors, in order to their winning the prize.

How can you expect to dwell with God for ever, if you so neglect and forsake him here? This your practice shows, that you place not your happiness in God, in nearness to him, and communion with him...Now, if this be the case with you respecting God, then how can you expect to have it for your happiness to all eternity, to be with God, and to enjoy holy communion with him?

If ever you truly come to Christ, you must come to him to make you better. You must come as a patient comes to his physician, with his diseases or wounds to be cured. Spread all your wickedness before him, and do not plead your goodness; but plead your badness, and your necessity on that account: and say, as the Psalmist in the text, not Pardon mine iniquity, for it is not so great as it was, but, "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.

Many of you have by covenant given up yourselves and all you have to God. You have disowned and renounced any right in yourselves or in any thing that you have, and have given to God all the absolute right; and if you be true Christians, you have done it from the heart.

They are guilty of a provoking contempt, who live in a *careless neglect* of their salvation; they who are secure in their sins, and are not much concerned about either salvation or damnation. This is practically charging God with folly.—Its language is, that all is in vain, and to no purpose; that God hath contrived and consulted for our salvation, when there was no need of it.

(The saints) are not, by any means, in any degree to attribute their godliness, their safe and happy state and condition, to any natural difference between them and other men, or to any strength or righteousness of their own. They have no reason to exalt themselves in the least degree; but God is the being whom they should exalt. They should exalt God the Father, who chose them in Christ, who set his love upon them, and gave them salvation, before they were born, and even before the world was. If they inquire, why God set his love on them, and chose them rather than others, if they think they can see any cause out of God, they are greatly mistaken. They should exalt God the Son, who bore their names on his heart, when he came into the world, and hung on the cross, and in whom alone they have righteousness and strength. They should exalt God the Holy Ghost, who of sovereign grace

has called them out of darkness into marvellous light; who has by his own immediate and free operation, led them into an understanding of the evil and danger of sin, and brought them off from their own righteousness, and opened their eyes to discover the glory of God, and the wonderful riches of God in Jesus Christ, and has sanctified them, and made them new creatures. When they hear of the wickedness of others, or look upon vicious persons, they should think how wicked they once were, and how much they provoked God, and how they deserved for ever to be left by him to perish in sin, and that it is only sovereign grace which has made the difference.

There are but two states in this world, a state of sin, and a state of holiness; a natural state, and a converted state. There is but one way in which we can come to life, which renders the determination of reason much the easier. There are but two masters, to one of which we must be reputed the servants, Baal and Jehovah, God and Mammon: there are but two competitors for the possession of us, Christ and the devil.—There are but two paths, in one of which you are to travel, either in the straight and narrow way which leadeth unto life, or the broad way which leadeth unto destruction.

Faith is a sensibleness of what is real in the work of redemption; and the soul that believes doth entirely depend on God for all salvation, in its own sense and act. Faith abases men, and exalts God; it gives all the glory of redemption to him alone. It is necessary in order to saving faith, that man should be emptied of himself, be sensible that he is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

You need not be at all the more fearful of coming (to Christ) because of your sins, let them be ever so black. If you had as much guilt lying on each of your souls as all the wicked men in the world, and all the damned souls in hell; yet if you come to God for mercy, sensible of your own vileness, and seeking pardon only through the free mercy of God in Christ, you would not need to be afraid; the greatness of your sins would be no impediment to your pardon. Therefore, if your souls be burdened, and you are distressed for fear of hell, you need not bear that burden and distress any longer. If you are but *willing*, you may freely come and unload yourselves, and cast all your burdens on Christ, and rest in him.

The sufferings of Christ fully satisfy justice. The justice of God, as the supreme Governor and Judge of the world, requires the punishment of sin. The supreme Judge must judge the world according to a rule of justice. God doth not show mercy as a judge, but as a sovereign; therefore his exercise of mercy as a sovereign, and his justice as a judge, must be made consistent one with another; and this is done by the sufferings of Christ, in which sin is punished fully, and justice answered.

The work we have to do is not an obedience only to some, but to all the commands of God; a compliance with every institution of worship; a diligent use of all the appointed means of grace; a doing of all duty towards God and towards man.-It is not sufficient that men have some respect to all the commands of God, and that they may be said to seek their salvation in some sort of observance of all the commands; but they must be devoted to it. They must not make this a business by the by, or a thing in which they are negligent and careless, or which they do with a slack hand; but it must be their great business, being attended to as their great concern. They must not only seek, but strive; they must do what their hand findeth to do with their might, as men thoroughly engaged in their minds, and influenced and set forward by great desire and strong resolution. They must act as those that see so much of the importance of religion above all other things, that everything else must be as an occasional affair, and nothing must stand in competition with its duties. This must be the one thing they do.

Why should God be looked upon as obliged to bestow salvation upon you, when you have been so ungrateful for the mercies he has bestowed upon you already? God has tried you with a great deal of kindness, and he never has sincerely been thanked by you for any of it. God has watched over you, and preserved you, and provided for you, and followed you with mercy all your days; and yet you have continued sinning against him. He has given you food and raiment, but you have improved both in the service of sin. He has preserved you while you slept; but when you awoke, it was to return to the old trade of sinning. God, notwithstanding this ingratitude, has still continued his mercy; but his kindness has never won your heart, or brought you to a more grateful behaviour towards him.

You have shown a greater regard to wicked men than to God; you have honoured them more, loved them better, and adhered to them rather than to him. Yea, you have honoured the devil, in many respects, more than God: you have chosen his will and his interest, rather than God's will and his glory: you have chosen a little worldly pelt, rather than God: you have set more by a vile lust than by him: you have chosen these things, and rejected God. You have set your heart on these things, and cast God behind your back: and where is the injustice if God is pleased to show greater respect to others than to you, or if he chooses others and rejects you? You have shown greater respect to vile and worthless things, and no respect to God's glory; and why may not God set his love on others, and have no respect to your happiness? You have shown great respect to others, and not to God, whom you are laid under infinite obligations to respect above all; and why may not God show respect to others, and not to you, who never have laid him under the least obligation?

The very beasts, when they see signs of an approaching storm, will betake themselves to their dens for shelter. Yet you, when abundantly warned of the approaching storm of divine vengeance, will not fly to the hiding-place from the storm, and the covert from the tempest. The sparrow, the swallow, and other birds, when they are forewarned of approaching winter, will betake themselves to a safer climate. Yet you who have been often forewarned of the piercing blasts of divine wrath, will not, in order to escape them, enter into the New Jerusalem, of most mild and salubrious air, though the gate stands wide open to receive you. The very ants will be diligent in summer to lay up for winter: yet you will do nothing to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come.

This work or business, which must be done in order to the salvation of men, is a great undertaking. It often appears so to men upon whom it is urged. Utterly to break off from all their sins, and to give up themselves forever to the business of religion, without making a reserve of any one lust, submitting to and complying with every command of God, in all cases, and persevering therein, appears to many so great a thing, that they are in vain urged to undertake it....The greater part of men therefore choose to put it off, and keep it at as great a distance as they can. They cannot bear to think of entering immediately on such a hard service, and rather than do it, they will run the risk of eternal damnation, by putting it off to an uncertain future opportunity.

If you are a poor, distressed sinner, whose heart is ready to sink for fear that God never will have mercy on you, you need not be afraid to go to Christ, for fear that he is either unable or unwilling to help you. Here is a strong foundation, and an inexhaustible treasure, to answer the necessities of your poor soul, and here is infinite grace and gentleness to invite and embolden a poor, unworthy, fearful soul to come to it. If Christ accepts of you, you need not fear but that you will be safe, for he is a strong Lion for your defence. And if you come, you need not fear but that you shall be accepted; for he is like a Lamb to all that come to him, and receives then with infinite grace and tenderness. ... This may well make the poor unworthy creature bold in coming to him. You need not hesitate one moment; but may run to him, and cast yourself upon him. You will certainly be graciously and meekly received by him. Though he is a lion, he will only be a lion to your enemies, but he will be a lamb to you.

They should go through their work with earnest labour, as Christ did. The time when others were asleep was a time when Christ was about his great work, and was engaged in it with all his might, agonizing in it; conflicting and wrestling, in tears, and in blood. So should Christians with the utmost earnestness improve their time with souls engaged in this work, pushing through the opposition they meet with in it, pushing through all difficulties and sufferings there are in the way, running with patience the race set before them, conflicting with the enemies of their souls with all their might; as those that wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

The consideration of what has been said of the glory and happiness of the saints may show us the exceeding folly of those that think to purchase so great happiness by their own righteousness. What a vain thought have men of their performances to think them a sufficient price to offer to God to purchase such glory of him! How would God dishonour himself, and dishonour such riches of his own goodness, if he should bestow them on men for their righteousness, and should accept their miserable performances as the price of them!.. Your heart must be brought to close with him who has purchased heaven. Renouncing all other ways, your heart must entirely close with him, and adhere to him, as the way, the truth, and the life. Your heart must be drawn to him, and it must be pleasing

and sweet to you to have heaven as a free gift, as the fruit of mercy and saving grace, and you must assuredly believe that Christ is a sufficient Saviour, and your soul must acquiesce in the way of salvation by him, by his blood and his righteousness, as a wise, holy, sufficient, and excellent way...You must choose the God of heaven for your portion. ... You must esteem and relish the enjoyment of him far above all other things. You must be brought to see that there is that in the enjoyment of God and communion with him that is far better than all the profits or pleasures of the world. It must be so with you, that if you could have your choice of all kinds of happiness you could devise, and have which you would, and in what degree you would, to all eternity, this would be what you would far prefer... Your heart must be brought sincerely to close with the employments of heaven.

Let men pretend what they may, their hearts are not turned from sin, if they do not forsake it. He is not converted, who is not really come to a disposition utterly to forsake all ways of sin. If ever sinners have true hope and comfort, they must take a final leave of sin, as the children of Israel did of the Egyptians at the Red sea. Persons may have a great deal of trouble from sin, and many conflicts and struggles with it, and seem to forsake it for a time, and yet not forsake it finally; as the children of Israel had with the Egyptians. They had a long struggle with them before they were freed from them....So sinners must not only part with sin for a little time, but they must forsake it for ever, and be willing never to see or have anything to do with their old sinful ways and enjoyments. They must forsake that which is their iniquity, the sin which most easily besets them, and to which by their constitution or custom they have been most addicted, which has been, as it were, the dearest of all, and most respected, as a king among the army of sins; though that must be slain too, as Pharaoh, the king of the Egyptians, was in the Red sea.

Souls are wont to be brought into trouble before God bestows true hope and comfort. The corrupt hearts of men naturally incline to stupidity and senselessness before God comes with the awakening influences of his Spirit. They are quiet and secure; they have no true comfort and hope, and yet they are quiet; they are at ease. They are in miserable slavery, and yet seek not a remedy. They say, as the children of Israel did in Egypt to Moses, "let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians." But if God has a design of mercy to them, it is his manner before he bestows true hope and comfort on them, to bring them into trouble, to

distress them, and spoil their ease and false quietness, and to rouse them out of their old resting and sleeping places, and to bring them into a wilderness.

God is wont, before he renews comfort and hope to them, to bring them into greater trouble. As a sinner before his first comfort in his conversion is brought into trouble, so it is wont to be with the saints after their backslidings and decays, before renewed hope and comfort is granted. There is a work of awakening wrought upon them. While they remain in their corrupt frames, they are, as it were, asleep. They are like the ten foolish virgins who slumbered and slept; and as persons who are asleep, they are unconscious, not sensible where they are, nor what are their circumstances. Therefore when God is coming and returning to them by his Spirit, commonly his first work upon them is a work of awakening, to wake them out of sleep, and rouse them to some sensibility, to make them sensible of the great folly of their ways, and how they have displeased and offended God, and what mischief they have done.

This holy heavenly spark is put into the soul in conversion, and God maintains it there. All the powers of hell cannot put it out, for God will keep it alive, and it shall prevail more and more. Though it be but small, yet it is powerful; it has influence over the heart to govern it, and brings forth holy fruits in the life, and will not cease to prevail till it has consumed all the corruption that is left in the heart, and till it has turned the whole soul into a pure, holy, and heavenly flame, till the soul of man becomes like the angels, a flame of fire, and shines as the brightness of the firmament.

So that Christ, in the time of his agony, was wrestling not only with overwhelming views of his last sufferings, but he also wrestled, in that bloody sweat, with principalities and powers -- he contended at that time with the great leviathan that laboured to his utmost to tempt him to disobedience. So that then Christ had temptations every way to draw him off from obedience to God. He had temptations from his feeble human nature, that exceedingly dreaded such torments; and he had temptations from men, who were his enemies; and he had temptations from the ungrateful carriage of his own disciples; and he had temptations from the devil. He had also an overwhelming trial from the manifestation of God's own wrath; when, in the words of Isaiah, it pleased the Lord to bruise him and put him to grief.

But yet he failed not, but got the victory over all, and performed that great act of obedience at that time to that same God that hid himself from him, and was showing his wrath to him for men's sins, which he must presently suffer. Nothing could move him away from his steadfast obedience to God, but he persisted in saying, "Thy will be done:" expressing not only his submission, but his obedience; not only his compliance with the disposing will of God, but also with his perceptive will. God had given him this cup to drink, and had commanded him to drink it, and that was reason enough with him to drink it; hence he says, at the conclusion of his agony, when Judas came with his band, "The cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it?" John 18:11. Christ, at the time of his agony, had an inconceivably greater trial of obedience than any man or any angel ever had. How much was this trial of the obedience of the second Adam beyond the trial of the obedience of the first Adam! How light was our first father's temptation in comparison of this! And yet our first surety failed, and our second failed not, but obtained a glorious victory, and went and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Thus wonderful and glorious was the obedience of Christ, by which he wrought out righteousness for believers, and which obedience is imputed to them. No wonder that it is a sweet penalty sown, and that God stands ready to bestow heaven as its reward on all that believe on him.