**Pithy gems from the Puritan Richard Baxter!**
(1615 – 1691)

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Nothing below Heaven is worth setting our hearts upon!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Keep up a humble sense of your own faults—and that will make you compassionate to others.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

If you have anything to be proud of, remember that it is not your own, but has been given or lent to you by God, who especially hates pride!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Unity in things *necessary*,
Liberty in things *unnecessary*,
and Charity in *all*things.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Too many preachers are earthly, who seem to be heavenly.
Too many mind the things below, while they preach the things above.
Too many idolize the world, while they call men to condemn it.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

There is no separating sin and Hell.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Speak to your people as to men who must be awakened—either here or in Hell!
We must screw the truth into men's minds!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Does any man live more to himself, or less to God—than the proud man? Our very business is to teach the great lesson of *self-denial*and *humility* to our people—and how unfit is it then, that we should be proud ourselves!
We must study as hard how to *live*well—as how to *preach*well.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

What we most value—we shall think no pains too great to gain.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Self is the most treacherous enemy, and the most insinuating deceiver in the world!
Of all other vices—it is both the hardest to find out, and the hardest to cure.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Be of good cheer, Christian, the time is near, when God and you shall be as near as you can desire.*You shall dwell in His family!* You shall then have joy without sorrow, and rest without weariness!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine—lest you unsay with your lives, what you say with your tongues, and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labors!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Until men are deeply humbled for their sin—they can part with Christ and salvation for a lust, for a little worldly gain, for that which is less than nothing! But when God has enlightened their consciences, and broken their hearts—then they would give a world for Christ!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Is it but right that our hearts should be on God—when the heart of God is so much on us!
Lord, I surrender—I am completely overcome by your love!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

I take the *love of God* and *self-denial*—to be the sum of all saving grace and religion.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

In our first paradise in Eden, there was a way to go out—but no way to go in again.
But as for the Heavenly paradise, there is a way to go in—but no way to go out.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Of all the preaching in the world—I hate that preaching most, which tends to make the hearers laugh, or to move their minds with tickling levity and affect them as stage play does—instead of affecting them with a holy reverence for God.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

See that your chief study is about your *heart*—that there . . .
 God's image may be planted,
 and His interest advanced,
 and the flesh subdued,
 and the love of every sin cast out,
 and the love of holiness be nourished.
The first and great work of a Christian is about his heart.
"Keep your heart with all diligence—for out of it spring the issues of life!" Proverbs 4:23

  ~ ~ ~ ~

If my life is short—then why should I be sad to welcome endless glory?

  ~ ~ ~ ~

It is a contradiction to be a true Christian—and not humble.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

I preached as never sure to preach again—as a dying man to dying men!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Mere idleness and forgetting God, will keep a soul as certainly from Heaven, as a profane, licentious, fleshly life!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Suffering so unbolts the door of the heart—that the Word has easier entrance.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Do not content yourselves with being in a state of grace—but be also careful that your graces are kept in vigorous and lively exercise, and that you preach to yourselves the sermons which you study—before you preach them to others.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

One proud, ungracious word, one needless contention, one covetous action—may cut the throat of many a sermon, and blast the fruit of all that you have been doing!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

If you seek first to please God and are satisfied therein—you have but one to please instead of multitudes. A multitude of masters are harder to please than one.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Love Christ—and you will hate that which caused His death.  Love Him, and you will love to be made like Him—and hate that which is so contrary to Him.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Parents! It is in your hands to do your children the greatest kindness, or cruelty, in all the world! Help them to know God and to be saved—and you do more for them than if you helped them to be kings or princes. If you neglect their souls, and breed them in ignorance, worldliness, ungodliness, and sin—you betray them to the devil, the enemy of souls, even as truly as if you sold them to him! *You sell them to be slaves to Satan!*You betray them to him who will deceive them and abuse them in this life, and torment them in eternity!

O what a blessed day that will be, when I shall stand on the shore and look back on the raging seas I have safely passed—when I shall review my pains and sorrows, my fears and tears—and possess the glory which was the end of all!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Do not waste your time on light, weak, trivial books. Make careful choice of the books which you read—and let the holy Scriptures ever have the preeminence.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Lay siege to your sins, and starve them out by keeping away the food and fuel which is their maintenance and life. The longer you delay, the more your sin gets strength and rooting. If you cannot bend the *twig*—how will you be able to bend it when it is a *tree?*

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Spend your *time*in nothing which . . .
 you know must be repented of;
 you might not pray for the blessing of God;
 you could not review with a quiet conscience on your dying bed;
 you might not safely and properly be found doing if death should surprise you in the act!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

O spend your time as you would account of it in the day of Judgment!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Holiness is nothing else but the habitual and predominant devotion and dedication of soul, and body, and life, and all that we have to God; and esteeming, and loving, and serving, and seeking Him, before all the pleasures and prosperity of the flesh and the world.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

He is a foolish physician, and a most unfaithful friend—who will let a sick man die for fear of troubling him. In the same way, we are cruel wretches to our friends—if we will rather allow them to go quietly to Hell—than anger them, or hazard our friendship with them.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Prayer is the vital breath of the Christian.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Before and after you read the Scripture, pray earnestly that the Spirit who wrote it may interpret it for you, keep you from unbelief and error, and lead you into the truth.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

It is as hard a thing to maintain a sound understanding, a tender conscience, a lively, gracious, heavenly spirit, and an upright life—in this poor world—as to keep your candle lit in the midst of a great storm.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

It is not the reading of many books which is necessary to make a man wise or godly—but well reading of a few.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

The churchyard is the market place where all things are rated at their true value—and those who are approaching it, talk of the world and its vanities with a wisdom unknown before.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Such is the depth of the Christian Scriptures, that even if I were attempting to study them and nothing else from early boyhood to decrepit old age, with the most unwearied zeal, and talents greater than I have—I would be still daily making progress in discovering their treasures!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

The devils never had a Savior offered to them—but you have; and do you yet make light of Him?

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Do not over-value the manner of your own worship.
Do not over-vilify other men's worship of a different mode.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Paganism attributes the *creation*and the *sustaining*of the world to *blind chance*.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

You little know what you have done, when you have first broken the bounds of *modesty*. You have opened the door of your *imagination*to the devil—so that he can, almost at his pleasure ever after, represent the same sinful pleasure to you anew.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

That which once was—will be no more. Yesterday will never come again. Today is passing away—and will not return. You may work while it is day; but when you have lost that day—it will not return for you to work in. While your candle burns, you may make use of its light—but when it is done, it is too late to use it.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

I am but a pen in God's hands—what praise is due to a pen?

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Heaven will pay for any loss we may suffer to gain it—but nothing can pay for the loss of Heaven!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Every time we look upon our congregations—let us remember that they are the purchase of Christ's blood, and therefore should be regarded by us with the deepest interest and the most tender affection!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

God is the same God in heaven as on earth—but I shall not be the same man.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

This life was not intended to be the place of our perfection—but the preparation for it.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

The joys of Heaven are of so pure and spiritual a nature, that the heart of the wicked cannot desire them.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

I know that Christ is all in all—and that it is His presence which makes Heaven to be heaven. But yet it much sweetens the thoughts of that place to me, that there are there such a multitude of my most dear and precious friends in Christ.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Doubtless, in Heaven we shall no more be oppressed with the power of our corruptions, nor vexed with their presence. No pride, passion, slothfulness, senselessness, shall enter with us; no strangeness to God, and the things of God; no coldness of affections, nor imperfection in our love; no uneven walking, nor grieving of the Spirit; no scandalous action, or unholy living. We shall rest from all these forever!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

A good husband will either make a good wife—or profitably endure a bad one.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

In our first paradise in Eden there was one way to go out—but no way to go in again.
But as for the heavenly paradise, there is one way to go in—but not way to go out.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

The differences among Christians, are nothing in comparison of the differences among heathen!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

If it is an intolerable thing to cast into a fire for a year or a day, or an hour—then what will it be to suffer ten thousand times more forever in the fires of Hell? What if you were to suffer the martyr Lawrence's death—to be roasted upon a gridiron; or to be scraped or pricked to death as other martyrs were; or if you were to feed upon toads for a whole year? If you could not endure such things as these—then how will you endure the eternal flames of Hell?

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Men think God's laws are too many and too strict.
Yet they make their own, and are precise for keeping them.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Is it a small thing in your eyes to be loved by God—to be the son, the spouse, the love, the delight of the King of glory?

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Will it not awaken us to compassion, to look on a languishing man, and to think that within a few days his soul will be in Hell?

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Be careful how you spend your time! Spend your time in nothing which you know must be repented of.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

No man that has not the vitals of theology is capable of going beyond a fool in philosophy.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

The longer your delay repentance, the more your sin gets strength and rooting. If you cannot bend a twig, then how will you be able to bend it when it is a tree?

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Sin dwells in Hell, and holiness in Heaven.
Remember that every temptation is from the devil, to make you like himself.
Remember when you sin, that you are learning and imitating of the devil—and are so far like him. And the end of all, is that you may feel his pains. If Hell-fire is not good, then sin is not good.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

I remember no one sin that my conscience does so much accuse and judge me for, as for doing so little for the saving of souls, and not for dealing with the lost soul ones more fervently and earnestly for their conversion.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

*Humility* is not a mere ornament of a Christian, but an essential part of the new creature. It is a contradiction in terms, to be a Christian, and not humble.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Oh that Christians would learn to live with one eye on Christ crucified, and the other on his coming!

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Luxury and gluttony is a sin exceeding contrary to the love of God--it is idolatry! It has the heart, which God should have; and therefore gluttons are commonly and well called belly-gods, and god-bellies, because that love, that care, that delight, that service and diligence which God should have is given by the glutton to his belly and his throat.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Why are our hearts not continually set on Heaven? Why do we not dwell there in constant contemplation? Bend your soul to study eternity, busy yourself about the life to come, habituate yourself to such contemplations. Let not those thoughts be seldom and cursory, but bathe yourself in Heaven's delights.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

He who has not so much sense of his faults as sincerely to lament them—will hardly have so much more as to move him to reform them.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

To love a small sin, is a great sin.

  ~ ~ ~ ~

Oh what silly heads and hearts, have all those who, standing on the verge of an endless world, can think they have any time to spare.