

# The Need of Personal Revival

by Richard Baxter

I know not what others think, but for my own part I am ashamed of my stupidity, and wonder at myself that I deal not with my own and others souls as one that looks for the great day of the Lord; and that I can have room for almost any other thoughts and words; and that such astonishing matters do not wholly absorb my mind. I marvel how I can preach of them slightly and coldly; and how I can let men alone in their sins; and that I do not go to them, and beseech them, for the Lord's sake, to repent, however they may take it, and whatever pain and trouble it should cost me.

I seldom come out of the pulpit but my conscience smiteth me that I have been no more serious and fervent. It accuseth me not so much for want of ornaments and elegancy, nor for letting fall an unhandsome word; but it asketh me, 'How couldst thou speak of life and death with such a heart? How couldst thou preach of heaven and hell in such a careless, sleepy manner? Dost thou believe what thou sayest? Art thou in earnest, or in jest? How canst thou tell people that sin is such a thing, and that so much misery is upon them and before them, and be no more affected with it? Shouldst thou not weep over such a people, and should not thy tears interrupt thy words? Shouldst thou not cry aloud, and show them their transgressions; and entreat and beseech them as for life and death?'

And for myself, as I am ashamed of my dull and careless heart, and of my slow and unprofitable course of life, so, the Lord knows, I am ashamed of every sermon I preach; when I think what I have been speaking of, and who sent me, and that men's salvation or damnation is so much concerned in it, I am ready to tremble lest God should judge me as a slihter of His truths and the souls of men, and lest in the best sermon I should be guilty of their blood. Me thinks we should not speak a word to men in matters of such consequence without tears, or the greatest earnestness that possibly we can; were not we too much guilty of the sin which we reprove, it would be so.

Truly this is the peal that conscience doth ring in my ears, and yet my drowsy soul will not be awakened. Oh, what a thing is an insensible, hardened heart! O Lord, save us from the plague of infidelity and hard-heartedness ourselves, or else how shall we be fit instruments of saving others from it? Oh, do that on our souls which thou wouldst use us to do on the souls of others.