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Of the Imitation of Christ, and Contempt of All the Vanities of the World



“**HE THAT** followeth me, walketh not in darkness,”¹ saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are taught, how we ought to imitate his life and manners, if we will be truly enlightened, and be delivered from all blindness of heart.

Let therefore our chief endeavor be, to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ.

2. The doctrine of Christ exceedeth all the doctrines of holy men; and he that hath the Spirit, will find therein a hidden manna.

But it falleth out, that many who often hear the gospel of Christ, are yet but little affected, because they lack the spirit of Christ.

But whosoever would fully and feelingly understand the words of Christ, must endeavor to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ.

3. What will it avail thee to dispute profoundly of the Trinity,

if thou be lacking in humility, and art thereby displeasing to the Trinity?

Surely high words do not make a man holy and just; but a virtuous life makes him dear to God.

I had rather feel compunction than understand the definition thereof.

If thou didst know the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would all that profit thee without the love of God,² and without grace?

Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity,³ except to love God, and to serve him only.

This is the highest wisdom, by contempt of the world to tend toward the kingdom of heaven.

4. Vanity therefore it is, to seek after perishing riches, and to trust in them.

It is also vanity to hunt after honors, and to climb to high degree.

It is vanity to follow the desires of the flesh, and to labor for that for which thou must afterward suffer more grievous punishment.

Vanity it is, to wish to live long, and to be careless to live well.

It is vanity to mind only this present life, and not to foresee those things which are to come.

It is vanity to set thy love on that which speedily passes away, and not to hasten thither where everlasting joy abides.

5. Call often to mind that proverb that, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."⁴

Endeavor therefore to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things, and to turn thyself to the invisible.

For they that follow their lusts, do stain their own consciences, and lose the favor of God.

1. John 8:12
2. 1 Cor. 13:2
3. Eccles. 1:3
4. Eccles. 1:8