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Quotes by Butler, Samuel

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There is but one step from the Academy to the Fad.

- Butler, Samuel

It is not he who gains the exact point in dispute who scores most in controversy -- but he who has shown the better temper.

- Butler, Samuel

A skilful leech is better far, than half a hundred men of war.

- Butler, Samuel

The great pleasure of a dog is that you may make a fool of yourself with him and not only will he not scold you, but he will make a fool of himself too.

- Butler, Samuel

He has spent his life best who has enjoyed it most. God will take care that we do not enjoy it any more than is good for us.

- Butler, Samuel

Evil is like water, it abounds, is cheap, soon fouls, but runs itself clear of taint.

- Butler, Samuel

All progress is based upon a universal innate desire on the part of every organism to live beyond its income.

- Butler, Samuel

Don't learn to do, but learn in doing. Let your falls not be on a prepared ground, but let them be bona fide falls in the rough and tumble of the world.

- Butler, Samuel

The public do not know enough to be experts, but know enough to decide between them.

- Butler, Samuel

What is faith but a kind of betting or speculation after all? It should be, I bet that my Redeemer liveth.

- Butler, Samuel

You can do very little with faith, but you can do nothing without it.

- Butler, Samuel

Those who have never had a father can at any rate never know the sweets of losing one.

To most men the death of his father is a new lease of life.

- Butler, Samuel

Eating is touch carried to the bitter end.

- Butler, Samuel

The healthy stomach is nothing if it is not conservative. Few radicals have good digestions.

- Butler, Samuel

There are more fools than knaves in the world, else the knaves would not have enough to live upon.

- Butler, Samuel

We all like to forgive, and love best not those who offend us least, nor who have done most for us, but those who make it most easy for us to forgive them.

- Butler, Samuel

Friendship is like money, easier made than kept.

- Butler, Samuel

A man's friendships are, like his will, invalidated by marriage -- but they are also no less invalidated by the marriage of his friends.

- Butler, Samuel

A friend who cannot at a pinch remember a thing or two that never happened is as bad as one who does not know how to forget.

- Butler, Samuel

All animals, except man, know that the principal business of life is to enjoy it.

- Butler, Samuel

A genius can never expect to have a good time anywhere, if he is a genuine article, but America is about the last place in which life will be endurable at all for an inspired writer of any kind.

- Butler, Samuel

He that complies against his will is of his own opinion still.

- Butler, Samuel

It is immoral to get drunk because the headache comes after the drinking, but if the headache came first and the drunkenness afterwards, it would be moral to get drunk.

- Butler, Samuel

Union may be strength, but it is mere blind brute strength unless wisely directed.

- Butler, Samuel

When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness that he hath committed and doeth that which is neither quite lawful nor quite right, he will generally be found to have gained in amiability what he has lost in holiness.

- Butler, Samuel

If God wants us to do a thing, he should make his wishes sufficiently clear. Sensible people will wait till he has done this before paying much attention to him.

- Butler, Samuel

God cannot alter the past, but historians can.

- Butler, Samuel

An empty house is like a stray dog or a body from which life has departed.

- Butler, Samuel

Man is God's highest present development. He is the latest thing in God.

- Butler, Samuel

Such as take lodgings in a head that's to be let unfurnished.

- Butler, Samuel

I reckon being ill as one of the great pleasures of life, provided one is not too ill and is not obliged to work till one is better.

- Butler, Samuel

To himself everyone is an immortal. He may know that he is going to die, but he can never know that he is dead.

- Butler, Samuel

Neither have they hearts to stay, nor wit enough to run away.

- Butler, Samuel

From a worldly point of view, there is no mistake so great as that of being always right.

- Butler, Samuel

Justice is my being allowed to do whatever I like. Injustice is whatever prevents my doing so.

- Butler, Samuel

A lawyers dream of heaven; every man reclaimed his property at the resurrection, and each tried to recover it from all his forefathers.

- Butler, Samuel

In law, nothing is certain but the expense.

- Butler, Samuel

Any fool can tell the truth, but it requires a man of some sense to know how to lie well.

- Butler, Samuel

The best liar is he who makes the smallest amount of lying go the longest way.

- Butler, Samuel

I do not mind lying, but I hate inaccuracy.

- Butler, Samuel

Lying has a kind of respect and reverence with it. We pay a person the compliment of acknowledging his superiority whenever we lie to him.

- Butler, Samuel

Life is one long process of getting tired.

- Butler, Samuel

To live is like to love-all reason is against it, and all healthy instinct for it.

- Butler, Samuel

Is life worth living? This is a question for an embryo not for a man.

- Butler, Samuel

Life is like playing the violin solo in public and learning the instrument as one goes on.

- Butler, Samuel

Life is the art of drawing sufficient conclusions from insufficient premises.

- Butler, Samuel

Man is the only animal that can remain on friendly terms with the victims he intends to eat until he eats them.

- Butler, Samuel

A hen is only an egg's way of making another egg.

- Butler, Samuel

Arguments are like fire-arms which a man may keep at home but should not carry about with him.

- Butler, Samuel

We are not won by arguments that we can analyze, but by tone and temper; by the manner, which is the man himself.

- Butler, Samuel

Neither irony or sarcasm is argument.

- Butler, Samuel

The youth of an art is, like the youth of anything else, its most interesting period. When it has come to the knowledge of good and evil it is stronger, but we care less about it.

- Butler, Samuel

Logic is like the sword -- those who appeal to it, shall perish by it.

- Butler, Samuel

One of the first businesses of a sensible man is to know when he is beaten, and to leave off fighting at once.

- Butler, Samuel

It is better to have loved and lost than never to have lost at all.

- Butler, Samuel

Loyalty is still the same, whether it win or lose the game; true as a dial to the sun, although it be not shined upon.

- Butler, Samuel

The most important service rendered by the press and the magazines is that of educating people to approach printed matter with distrust.

- Butler, Samuel

Vaccination is the medical sacrament corresponding to baptism.

- Butler, Samuel

The money men make lives after them.

- Butler, Samuel

The want of money is the root of all evil.

- Butler, Samuel

Compound for sins they are inclined to by damning those they have no mind to.

- Butler, Samuel

It is a wise tune that knows its own father, and I like my music to be the legitimate offspring of respectable parents.

- Butler, Samuel

The public buys its opinions as it buys its meat, or takes in its milk, on the principle that it is cheaper to do this than to keep a cow. So it is, but the milk is more likely to be watered.

- Butler, Samuel

Opinions have vested interests just as men have.

- Butler, Samuel

Parents are the last people on earth who ought to have children.

- Butler, Samuel

All philosophies, if you ride them home, are nonsense, but some are greater nonsense than others.

- Butler, Samuel

For most men, and most circumstances, pleasure --tangible material prosperity in this world --is the safest test of virtue. Progress has ever been through the pleasures rather than through the extreme sharp virtues, and the most virtuous have leaned to excess rather than to asceticism.

- Butler, Samuel

Men are seldom more commonplace than on supreme occasions.

- Butler, Samuel

The advantage of doing one's praising for oneself is that one can lay it on so thick and exactly in the right places.

- Butler, Samuel

The clergyman is expected to be a kind of human Sunday.

- Butler, Samuel

In matrimony, to hesitate is sometimes to be saved.

- Butler, Samuel

The world will only, in the end, follow those who have despised as well as served it.

- Butler, Samuel

Then spare the rod and spoil the child.

- Butler, Samuel

For every why he had a wherefore.

- Butler, Samuel

If you follow reason far enough it always leads to conclusions that are contrary to reason.

- Butler, Samuel

I believe that he was really sorry that people would not believe he was sorry that he was not more sorry.

- Butler, Samuel

There are two great rules of life; the one general and the other particular. The first is that everyone can, in the end, get what he wants, if he only tries. That is the general rule. The particular rule is that every individual is, more or less, an exception to the rule.

- Butler, Samuel

Science, after all, is only an expression for our ignorance of our own ignorance.

- Butler, Samuel

The one serious conviction that a man should have is that nothing is to be taken too seriously.

- Butler, Samuel

Belief like any other moving body follows the path of least resistance.

- Butler, Samuel

Because they did not see merit where they should have seen it, people, to express their regret, will go and leave a lot of money to the very people who will be the first to throw stones at the next person who has anything to say and finds a difficulty in getting a hearing.

- Butler, Samuel

Birth and death are so closely related that one could not destroy either without destroying the other at the same time. It is extinction that makes creation possible.

- Butler, Samuel

The oldest books are still only just out to those who have not read them.

- Butler, Samuel

The man who lets himself be bored is even more contemptible than the bore.

- Butler, Samuel

People are always good company when they are doing what they really enjoy.

- Butler, Samuel

It is tact that is golden, not silence.

- Butler, Samuel

Silence is not always tact, but it is tact that is golden, not silence.

- Butler, Samuel

People care more about being thought to have taste than about being thought either good, clever or amiable.

- Butler, Samuel

There is nothing so unthinkable as thought, unless it be the entire absence of thought.

- Butler, Samuel

There is no such source of error as the pursuit of truth.

- Butler, Samuel

For truth is precious and divine, too rich a pearl for carnal swine.

- Butler, Samuel

A blind man knows he cannot see, and is glad to be led, though it be by a dog; but he that is blind in his understanding, which is the worst blindness of all, believes he sees as the best, and scorns a guide.

- Butler, Samuel

The three most important things a man has are, briefly, his private parts, his money, and his religious opinions.

- Butler, Samuel

The function of vice is to keep virtue within reasonable bounds.

- Butler, Samuel

Half the vices which the world condemns most loudly have seeds of good in them and require moderated use rather than total abstinence.

- Butler, Samuel

Virtue knows that it is impossible to get on without compromise, and tunes herself, as it were, a trifle sharp to allow for an inevitable fall in playing.

- Butler, Samuel

Rare virtues are like rare plants or animals, things that have not been able to hold their

own in the world. A virtue to be serviceable must, like gold, be alloyed with some commoner but more durable metal.

- Butler, Samuel

A virtue to be serviceable must, like gold, be alloyed with some commoner, but more durable alloy.

- Butler, Samuel

Everyone should keep a mental wastepaper basket, and the older he grows, the more things will he promptly consign to it.

- Butler, Samuel

When the water of a place is bad it is safest to drink none that has not been filtered through either the berry of a grape, or else a tub of malt. These are the most reliable filters yet invented.

- Butler, Samuel

For Wealth are all things that conduce, to one's destruction or their use. A standard both to buy and sell, all things from heaven down to hell.

- Butler, Samuel

Though wisdom cannot be gotten for gold, still less can be gotten without it.

- Butler, Samuel

Words are not as satisfactory as we should like them to be, but, like our neighbors, we have got to live with them and must make the best and not the worst of them.

- Butler, Samuel

Work with some men is as besetting a sin as idleness.

- Butler, Samuel

Every man's work, whether it be literature, or music or pictures or architecture or anything else, is always a portrait of himself.

- Butler, Samuel

The only living works are those which have drained much of the author's own life into them.

- Butler, Samuel

People in general are equally horrified at hearing the Christian religion doubted, and at seeing it practiced.

- Butler, Samuel

If there is any moral in Christianity, if there is anything to be learned from it, if the whole story is not profitless from first to last, it comes to this: that a man should back his own opinion against the world's.

- Butler, Samuel

The voice of the Lord is the voice of common sense, which is shared by all that is.

- Butler, Samuel

Conscience is thoroughly well-bred and soon leaves off talking to those who do not wish to hear it.

- Butler, Samuel

It is our less conscious thoughts and our less conscious actions which mainly mould our lives and the lives of those who spring from us.

- Butler, Samuel

The thief. Once committed beyond a certain point he should not worry himself too much about not being a thief any more. Thieving is God's message to him. Let him try and be a good thief.

- Butler, Samuel

A man should be just cultured enough to be able to look with suspicion upon culture at first, not second hand.

- Butler, Samuel

To die is but to leave off dying and do the thing once for all.

- Butler, Samuel

If life must not be taken too seriously -- then so neither must death.

- Butler, Samuel

The dead should be judged like criminals, impartially, but they should be allowed the benefit of the doubt.

- Butler, Samuel

There is nothing which at once affects a man so much and so little as his own death.

- Butler, Samuel



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