

Quotes on Idolatry

by

Richard Baxter

Every man is naturally an idolater. Our hearts turned from God in our first fall; and, ever since, the creature hath been our god. This is the grand sin of our nature. Every unregenerate man ascribes to the creature divine prerogatives, and allows it the highest room in his soul; or, if he is convinced of misery, he flies to it as his saviour. Indeed, God and His Christ shall be called Lord and Saviour; but the real expectation is from the creature, and the work of God is laid upon it. Pleasure, profit and honour, are the natural man's trinity and his carnal self is these in unity.

The grand Idol that is exalted against the Lord, is *Carnal Self*: This is the God of all the unregenerate: This hath their hearts, their care, their labours. The pleasing of this flesh is the end of the unsanctified, and therefore the summary capital sin, which virtually containeth all the rest; Even as the Pleasing of God is the *End* of every Saint, and therefore the summary capital duty which virtually containeth all other duties.

You are Guilty of Idolatry, which is high Treason against the God of Heaven. That, which hath your highest estimation, and dearest affection, and chiefest service, is your God. But this the world hath; therefore it is your God. That which hath the most of your Hearts is your God. But it is the world that hath the most of your hearts. You know that the main drift of your life is for the world.

Self is the God of wicked men, or the world's great Idol...Every man is an Idolater so far as he is selfish. God is not a bare name: He that takes away his Essence or Attributes and Prerogatives, and yet thinks he believeth in him, because he leaveth him his name and Titles, doth as bad as they that set up an Image, and worship that instead of God.

The world is every carnal man's *Idol*, and God cannot endure Idolatry: To see his creature set up in his stead, and rob him of his Esteem and Interest, and be loved, honoured and served before him: and to see such contemptible things be taken as gods, while God himself

stands by neglected, he will not, he cannot endure this. Either grace shall take down the Idol, or judgement and hell shall plague the Idolater, for he hath Resolved that he will not give his glory to another.

God therefore being our *End*, we must Love the world only for his sake, as it cometh from him and leadeth to him. The *least* love to the world *for itself* is Idolatrous. As you may not allow another woman the *least* Conjugal affection, though you allow your wife more, without some guilt of un-chastity; so you may not in the least measure love the creature for itself without some guilt of spiritual un-chastity. If God must be loved with all the heart, and soul, and strength, then there is none left for any co-partner whatsoever.