

Quotes on Mortification

by

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It is impossible in its own nature that any should have spiritual light and comfort before sin is mortified. If sinners had comfort while sin is in reigning power, it could not be spiritual comfort; for spiritual comfort is the same with gracious comfort. But how can there be gracious comfort where grace has no place? But if there be grace, sin will not be in reigning power; for the nature of grace is to mortify sin. And as there can be no spiritual comfort without a degree of mortification of sin in those in whom sin is mortified, spiritual comfort cannot be any more than in proportion as sin is mortified.

One way of sin lived in will wonderfully keep you down in your spiritual prosperity, and in the growth and strength of grace in your hearts. It will grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and will in a great measure banish him from you: this will prevent the good influence of the word and ordinances of God to the causing of grace to flourish in you. It will be a great obstacle to their good effect. It will be like an ulcer within a man, which, while it remains, will keep him weak and lean, though you feed him with ever so wholesome food, or feast him ever so daintily.

Be persuaded to travel in the way that leads to heaven; *viz.* in holiness, self-denial, mortification, obedience to all the commands of God, following Christ's example; in a way of a heavenly life, of imitation of the saints and angels in heaven. Let it be your daily work, from morning till night, and hold out in it to the end; let nothing stop or discourage you, or turn you aside from this road. And let all other concerns be subordinated to this.

A man who doth not avoid every sin, and is not universally obedient, cannot be well guarded against great sins. The sin in which he lives will be always an inlet, an open door, by which Satan from time to time will find entrance. It is like a breach in your fortress, through which the enemy may get in, and find his way to you greatly to hurt and wound you. If there be any way of sin which is retained as an outlet to corruption, it will be like a breach in a

dam, which, if it be let alone, and be not stopped, will grow bigger and wider, and will endanger the whole.

Sin, as it is the most hateful evil, is that which is most prejudicial to our interest, and tends most to our hurt of anything in the world. If we live in any way that is displeasing to God, it may be the ruin of our souls. Though men reform all other wicked practices, yet if they live in but one sinful way, which they do not forsake, it may prove their everlasting undoing.

Inquire whether your hope and comfort are such as have arisen on the slaying of sin. If your hope is that which you obtained before this, you obtained it too soon, and had better be without it than with it. It is not sufficient evidence of your hope, that it was given after much trouble and great terrors, or great relentings of heart for sin, and bewailing that you had done so wickedly, or that it was after reformations, and abstaining from former ways of sin, and a total reformation of some particular evil practices. But if it be a true hope, it was given after the slaying of sin.

There is no such thing as being saved from hell, without being saved from sin.

Persons may be exceedingly troubled for sin, and yet sin be saved alive. Persons may seem to lament they have done thus and thus, and weep many tears, and cry out of their sinfulness and wickedness, and yet the life of sin be whole in them. But if so, they never shall receive true comfort. They may refrain from sin; there may be a great reformation and exact life for a time; or there may be a total reformation of some particular ways of sin, and yet no true hope; because sin is only restrained; it is not slain. Many men are brought to restrain sin, and to give it slight wounds, who cannot be brought to kill it. Wicked men are loath to kill sin. They have been very good friends to it ever since they have been in the world, and have always treated it as one of their most familiar and best friends. They have allowed it the best room in their hearts, and have given it the best entertainment they could, and they are very loth to destroy it. But until this be done, God never will give them true comfort.

A hope of eternal life, if given before the slaying of sin, would be misimproved and abused. If it were possible that a sinner could obtain a title to eternal life before sin was mortified, and so could have his own safety and God's favour manifested to him, he would only improve it to encourage and embolden himself in sin. Hope, if they had it then, would have a pernicious influence and tendency. Till sin is slain, they stand in need of fear to restrain sin. If fear were once gone before sin is slain, they would soon run into all manner of wickedness, and without restraint. And so Christians themselves, while they are in corrupt frames, stand in need of fear to restrain sin; for at such times love is in a great degree dormant. It is of necessity that persons should have some principle or other to restrain them from sin. But there is no principle which can be effectual to restrain men from sin any farther than it is in exercise. If love is not in exercise it will not restrain men. So that at such times the saints need fear. And therefore God has wisely ordered it, that at such times their evidences should be darkened and their hopes clouded, that they may have fear, when love is not awake, to restrain them. The godly themselves, if their hope were all alive at those times when they are in carnal and thoughtless frames, and grace is asleep, would be in great danger to abuse their hope, and take encouragement from it to indulge their lusts, or at least, to be the less careful to restrain and resist them.

It is most imprudent, as well as most unChristian, to take it amiss, and resent it, when we are thus told of our faults: we should rather rejoice in it, that we are shown our spots. Thus also we should improve what our *enemies* say of us. If they from an ill spirit reproach and revile us to our faces, we should consider it, so far as to reflect inward upon ourselves, and inquire whether it be not so, as they charge us. For though what is said, be said in a reproachful, reviling manner; yet there may be too much truth in it. When men revile others even from an ill spirit towards them; yet they are likely to fix upon real faults; they are likely to fall upon us where we are weakest and most defective, and where we have given them most occasion. An enemy will soonest attack us where we can least defend ourselves: and a man that reviles us, though he do it from an unChristian spirit, and in an unchristian manner, yet will be most likely to speak of that, for which we are really most to blame, and are most blamed by others. So when we hear of others talking against us behind our backs, though they do very ill in so doing, yet the right improvement of it will be, to *reflect upon ourselves*, and consider whether we indeed have not those faults which they lay to our

charge. This will be a more Christian and a more wise improvement of it, than to be in a rage, to revile again, and to entertain an ill-will towards them for their evil-speaking. This is the most wise and prudent improvement of such things. Hereby we may get good out of evil; and this is the surest way to defeat the designs of our enemies in reviling and backbiting us. They do it from ill will, and to do us an injury; but in this way we may turn it to our own good.