

Quotes on Sin

by

Richard Baxter

Sin dwelleth in us, when we have preached ever so much against it; and one degree prepareth the heart for another, and one sin inclineth the mind to more. If one thief be in the house, he will let in the rest; because they have the same disposition and design. A spark is the beginning of a flame; and a small disease may cause a greater.

It is the depth of your sinfulness to be insensible of it; the dead feel not that they are dead. If once thou wert made alive, thou wouldst see more amiss in thyself, and marvel at thyself for making so light of it.

O what a heinous thing is it in us, to study how to disgrace sin to the utmost, and make it as odious in the eyes of our people as we can, and when we have done, to live in it, and secretly cherish that which we publicly disgrace! What vile hypocrisy is it, to make it our daily work to cry it down, and yet to keep to it; to call it publicly all naught, and privately to make it our bed-fellow and companion; to bind heavy burdens on others, and not to touch them ourselves with a finger!

The neglect of discipline hath a strong tendency to delude immortal souls, by making those think they are Christians that are not, while they are permitted to live with the character of such, and are not separated from the rest by God's ordinance: and it may make the scandalous think their sin a tolerable thing, which is so tolerated by the pastors of the church.

Never doth sin so reign in a church or state, as when it hath gained reputation, or, at least, is no disgrace to the sinner, nor a matter of offense to beholders.

Can you think that an unholy soul is fit for heaven? Alas! they cannot love God there, nor do him any service which he can accept. They are contrary to God; they loathe that which he most loveth; and love that which he abhorreth: they are incapable of that imperfect

communion with him; which his saints do here partake of. How then can they live in that perfect love of him, and full delight and communion with him, which is the blessedness of heaven?

That is the most wicked man, that hath in his heart the strongest Interest which is opposite unto God: and all that is not subordinate is opposite. Sin hath not so deep and strong an Interest in some Murderers, that kill a man in a passion, in some swearers that get nothing by it, but swear in a passion, or in some thieves, that steal in necessity, as it hath in many that seem sober and Religious.

You are told that if you will needs keep your sins, you shall keep the curse of God with them, and yet you will keep them. You are told that there is no way to happiness but by holiness; and yet you will not be holy. What would you have God say more to you? What would you have him do with his mercy? He offereth it to you, and you will not have it. You are in the ditch of sin and misery, and he would give you his hand to help you out, and you refuse his help: he would cleanse you of your sins, and you had rather keep them. You love your lust, and love your gluttony, and sports, and drunkenness, and will not let them go. Would you have him bring you to heaven whether you will or not? Or would you have him bring you and your sins to heaven together? Why that is an impossibility: you may as well expect he should turn the sun into darkness.

The same fleshly Power that draweth one man to whoredom and drunkenness, and covetousness, doth draw another to sloth and idleness. It is but several ways of Pleasing the same flesh, and obeying the same sensuality... Slothfulness doth contradict the very end of our creation and preservation, and the frame of our nature; and so provoketh God to cut us off and cast us as useless into the fire. Who dare so wrong the wisdom of God, as to say or think that he made us to do nothing!

All sin is hateful to God and none but the cleansed perfect soul shall stand before him, in the presence of his glory; nor any in whom iniquity hath dominion shall stand accepted in the presence of his Grace: But yet no particular sin is so hateful to him as Idolatry is... (*Idolatry*) is it high Treason against the God of heaven... its one thing to miscarry in a particular case,

and another thing to have other gods before and besides the Lord, the only God. Now this is the sin of every worldling: He hath taken down God from the throne in his own soul, and set up the flesh and the world in his stead: These he valueth, and magnifieth, and delighteth in: These have his very heart, while God that made it and redeemed him, is set light by. And do you think that this is a sin to be endured?

Consider what a Power it is that self beareth down in the world: The Commands of the God of heaven are overcome by it. The promises of eternal life are trod under foot by it. The threatening of endless torments are nothing to it. It casts by Heaven: it ventures upon Hell: It tramples upon the precious blood of Christ: It will not hear the voice of wisdom itself: Nor the voice of goodness and mercy itself: It refuseth him that speaks from heaven: Love itself is not lovely where self is Judge: It quencheth all the motions of the Spirit: it despiseth Ministers: It turneth mercies into wantonness and sin: Like Sampson, it breaks all bonds that are laid on it: and till it be weakened itself, there is no holding, no ruling, no saving the soul, that's ruled by it.

If you have true Self-denial, the drift of your lives is carried on in a successful opposition to carnal Self, so that you not only refuse to be ruled by it, and love it as your God, but you fight against it, and tread it down as your enemy: So that you go armed against Self in the course of your lives, and are striving against Self in every duty; and as others think, it then goes best with them, when Self is highest, and pleased best; so you will know that it then goeth best with you, when Self is lowest, and most effectually subdued.

O do not keep out the light of Conviction, that you may keep up your Idols in the dark: Your sin is never the less because you wilfully keep it out of sight: and your danger is never the less for being unknown! If you will sin in darkness, you shall suffer in darkness: As you have a fire of fleshly and worldly lusts within you, which abhors the light of saving truth; so God hath a fire of perpetual torment for you...If you love Darkness, who can you blame but your selves, if you be cast into outer darkness: And if you hate light, you cannot reasonably expect to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light.

And is it not Necessary to your salvation that you be delivered from the enemies of your salvation? and freed from such perilous snares? Can you conquer, while you are conquered? And if the world be not crucified to you, it doth conquer you: For its victory is upon your will and affections. And if it conquers you, it will condemn you. To be servants to the world is to be servants to sin.

Consider what cause of deep humiliation you carry about you in every duty! Besides all the wants and loathsome corruptions of your souls, which follow you wherever you go, the very sins of your duties, one would think, should humble you. Oh to have such low conceptions, such dull apprehensions, such heartless, unreverent poor expressions of such a God, such a Christ, such a glory, and such holy truth, should make us ashamed to open our Lips before the Lord, and wonder that he doth not tread us into hell, instead of regarding us or our services, and that fire doth not come forth from his jealousy and consume us!... Shall a wretch be Proud of that performance whose failings deserve everlasting torments! Must you be beholden to Christ to save you from the Hell that the sins of your performances deserve, and yet dare you be proud of them?

Our *Love* to the world is *crucified*, if we be crucified to the world. As this is the great Affection which God claimeth for himself, and which he maketh the seat of his most excellent grace; so is it that which he is most jealous of, and will least allow the creature to partake of; and the mis-employment of it is the greatest sin, as the right employment of it is the greatest duty.