

Quotes on Sin

by

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Sin is an infinite evil, because committed against an infinitely great and excellent Being, and so a violation of infinite obligation: therefore however great our care be to avoid sin, it cannot be more than proportionable to the evil we would avoid. Our care and endeavour cannot be infinite, as the evil of sin is infinite; but yet it ought to be to the utmost of our power; we ought to use every method that tends to the avoiding of sin.

All guilt is an evil of a dreadful nature: the least degree of it is enough utterly to undo any creature. It is a thing that reaches unto heaven, and cries to God, and brings down his wrath. The guilt of any one sin is so terrible an evil that it prevails to bind over the guilty person to suffer everlasting burnings: and so is in some respect infinite, in that it obliges to that punishment which has no end; and so is infinitely terrible. But this kind of evil has risen to a most amazing height in this world; where not only some persons are guilty, but all, in all nations and ages, are naturally guilty wretches...What guilt lies on some particular persons! How much more on some particular populous cities! How much more still on this wicked world! How much does the guilt of the world transcend all account, all expression, all powers of numbers or measures!

Men's lusts are like strong enemies, endeavouring to draw them into sin. If a man stood upon a dangerous precipice, and had enemies about him, pulling and drawing him, endeavouring to throw him down; would he, in such a case, choose or dare to stand near the edge? Would he not endeavour, for his own safety to keep at a distance? Those things that tend to feed lusts in the imagination are of this kind.—they lead and expose men to sin. Those things that have a natural tendency to excite in the mind the imagination of that which is the object of the lust certainly tend to feed and promote that lust.

Sin is the seed of misery; misery is the necessary fruit of it. It is necessary from the nature of God, who, being infinitely holy, necessarily hates it, and so necessarily arrays himself against

that being who remains under the pollution and guilt of it. And it is necessary from the nature of man, and the nature of sin: misery is the natural fruit of sin, as the bud and blossom are the natural fruit of that on which they grow.

The enmity that is in men's hearts against God is like a serpent, which, if it be let alone lies still: but if anybody disturbs it, will soon hiss, and be enraged, and show its serpentine spiteful nature. Notwithstanding the good opinion you have of yourself, yet a little trial would show you to be a viper, and your heart would be set all on rage against God. One thing that restrains you now is your hope. You hope to receive many things from God. Your own interest is concerned. So that both hope and fear operate together, to restrain your enmity from sensible exercises. But if once hope was gone, you would soon show what you were; you would feel your enmity against God in a rage.

It is the tendency of all sin, eternally to undo the soul. Every sin naturally carries hell in it! Therefore, all sin ought to be treated by us as we would treat a thing that is infinitely terrible. If anyone sin, yea, the least sin, do not necessarily bring eternal ruin with it, this is owing to nothing but the free grace and mercy of God to us, and not to the nature and tendency of sin itself. But certainly, we ought not to take the less care to avoid sin, or all that tends to it, for the freeness and greatness of God's mercy to us, through which there is hope of pardon; for that would be indeed a most ungrateful and vile abuse of mercy.

As long as you live in sin you do but cumber the ground, you are wholly unprofitable, and live in vain. He that refuses to live to the glory of God does not answer the end of his creation, and for what should he live? God made men to serve him; to this end he gave them life; and if there will not devote their lives to this end, how just would it be in God if he should refuse to continue their lives any longer! He has planted you in his vineyard, to bear fruit; and if you bring forth no fruit, why should he continue you any longer? how just would it be in him to cut you down!

It is not inconsistent with the justice of God to inflict an eternal punishment... If the evil of sin be infinite, as the punishment is, then it is manifest that the punishment is no more than proportionable to the sin punished, and is no more than sin deserves. And if the obligation

to love, honour, and obey God be infinite, then sin which is the violation of this obligation is a violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Again, if God be infinitely worthy of love, honour, and obedience, then our obligation to love, and honour, and obey him is infinitely great.

If the word of God will not awaken and convert sinners, nothing will.

While men continue in sin, they are filling the measure set them. This is the work in which they spend their whole lives; they begin in their childhood; and if they live to grow old in sin, they still go on with this work. It is the work with which every day is filled up. They may alter their business in other respects; they may sometimes be about one thing, and sometimes about another; but they never change from this work of filling up the measure of their sins. Whatever they put their hands to, they are still employed in this work. This is the first thing that they set themselves about when they awake in the morning, and the last thing they do at night. They are all the while treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

If we in our thoughts compare the life that many men actually live in this world, with that life which they hope to live in another world, how ill do they consist together; how disagreeable and shocking is the comparison, or the union of them in our thoughts! How many are there who now are drunkards or unclean persons, or who live in the neglect of secret prayer, and who cast off fear and restrain prayer before God; and how many that are mere earth-worms in covetousness and eagerness after the world; how many proud men whose God is their earthly honour; how many wrathful men who spend their days in hatred of their neighbour; how many such are there who hope in a little time to be with an infinitely holy God, in his glorious presence, in his holy of holies, and with Jesus Christ, and in the arms of his love, and to be of the assembly of holy angels and saints in perfect purity, holiness, and love, loving, contemplating, and admiring God's glory, and enjoying unspeakable blessedness in communion with God! Thus wicked men's practice disagrees with their hopes.

Sin is the trouble or the cause of this trouble. Sin is the disease of the soul, and such a disease as will, if the soul is not benumbed cause exceeding pain. Sin brings guilt, and that brings condemnation and wrath. All this trouble arises from conviction of sin. Awakened sinners are convinced that they are sinful. Before the sinner thought well of himself, or was not convinced that he was very sinful. But now he is led to reflect first on what he has done, how wickedly he has spent his time, what wicked acts or practices he has been guilty of. And afterwards in the progress of his awakenings he is made sensible of something of the sin and plague of his heart. They are made sensible of the guilt and wrath which sin brings. The threatenings of God's law are set home, and they are made sensible that God is angry, and that his wrath is dreadful.

One sin deserves eternal death and damnation, which, in the least degree of it, is the total destruction of the creature. How dreadful, then, is the misery of which natural persons are in danger, who have lived sometime in the world, and have committed thousands and thousands of sins, and have filled up many years with a course of sinning, and have committed many great sins, with high aggravations, who have sinned against the glorious gospel of Christ, and against great light, whose guilt is far more dreadful than that of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah! How dreadful is the punishment to which they are exposed, in which all their sins shall be punished according to their desert, and the uttermost farthing shall be exacted of them! The punishment of one idle word, or sinful thought, would be more than they could bear. How then will they bear all the wrath that shall be heaped upon them for all their multiplied and aggravated transgressions? If one sin deserves eternal death and damnation, how many deaths and damnations will they have accumulated upon them at once! Such an aggravated, multiplied death must they die every moment, and always continue dying such a death, and yet never be dead. Such misery as this may well be called the blackness of darkness. Hell may well be called the bottomless pit, if the misery is so unfathomably great.

They (*unregenerate men*) are under the power of a mortal disease, which, if it be not healed, will surely bring them to this (*eternal*) death. They are under the power and dominion of sin, and sin is a mortal disease of the soul. If it is not cured, it will certainly bring them to death; viz. to that second death of which we have heard. The infection of the

disease has powerfully seized their vital parts. The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint. The disease is inveterate. The infection is spread throughout the whole frame; the very nature is corrupted and ruined; and the whole must come to ruin, if God by his mighty power does not heal the disease.

It is evident that we ought to avoid things that expose and lead to sin; because a due sense of the evil of sin, and a just hatred of it, will necessarily have this effect upon us, to cause us so to do.—if we were duly sensible of the evil and dreadful nature of sin, we should have an exceeding dread of it upon our spirits. We should hate it worse than death, and should fear it worse than the devil himself; and dread it even as we dread damnation. But those things that men exceedingly dread, they naturally shun; and they avoid those things that they apprehend expose to them. As a child that has been greatly terrified by the sight of any wild beast, will by no means be persuaded to go where it apprehends that it shall fall in its way.

We ought to be much concerned to know whether we do not live in a *state of sin*. All unregenerate men live in sin. We are born under the power and dominion of sin, are sold under sin; every unconverted sinner is a devoted servant to sin and Satan. We should look upon it as of the greatest importance to us, to know in what state we are, whether we ever had any change made in our hearts from sin to holiness, or whether we be not still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; whether ever sin were truly mortified in us; whether we do not live in the sin of unbelief, and in the rejection of the Saviour.... Those who entertain the opinion and hope of themselves, that they are godly, should take great care to see that their foundation be right. Those that are in doubt should not give themselves rest till the matter be resolved.

Persons are in great danger of living in ways of sin and not being sensible of it, for want of duly regarding and considering their duty in the *full extent* of it. There are some who hear of the necessity of reforming from all sins, and attending all duties, and will set themselves to perform some particular duties, at the same time neglecting others.

Sin is of a deceitful nature, because, so far as it prevails, so far it gains the *inclination* and will, and that sways and biases the judgment. So far as any lust prevails, so far it biases the

mind to approve of it. So far as any sin sways the inclination or will, so far that sin seems pleasing and good to the man; and that which is pleasing, the mind is prejudiced to think is right.—Hence when any lust hath so gained upon a man, as to get him into a sinful way or practice; it having gained his will, also prejudices his understanding. And the more irregular a man walks, the more will his mind probably be darkened and blinded; because by so much the more doth sin prevail. Hence many men who live in ways which are not agreeable to the rules of God's word, yet are not *sensible* of it; and it is a difficult thing to make them so; because the same lust that leads them into that evil way, blinds them in it.

But sinful men are full of sin; full of principles and acts of sin: their guilt is like great mountains heaped one upon another, till the pile is grown up to heaven. They are totally corrupt, in every part, in all their faculties, and all the principles of their nature, their understandings, and wills; and in all their dispositions and affections...There are breaches of every command, in thought, word, and deed: a life full of sin; days and nights filled up with sin; mercies abused and frowns despised; mercy and justice, and all the divine perfections, trampled on; and the honour of each person in the Trinity trod in the dirt. Now if one sinful word or thought has so much evil in it, as to deserve eternal destruction, how do they deserve to be eternally cast off and destroyed, that are guilty of so much sin!

We should be much concerned to know whether we do not live in some way of sin, because we are exceedingly *prone* to walk in some such way.—The heart of man is naturally prone to sin; the weight of the soul is naturally that way, as the stone by its weight tendeth downwards. And there is very much of a remaining proneness to sin in the saints. Though sin be mortified in them, yet there is a body of sin and death remaining; there are all manner of lusts and corrupt inclinations. We are exceeding apt to get into some ill path or other. Man is so prone to sinful ways, that without maintaining a constant strict watch over himself, no other can be expected than that he will walk in some way of sin. Our hearts are so full of sin, that they are ready to betray us. That to which men are prone, they are apt to get into before they are aware. Sin is apt to steal in upon us unawares. Besides this, we live in a world where we continually meet with temptations; we walk in the midst of snares; and the devil, a subtle adversary, is continually watching over us, endeavouring, by all manner of wiles and devices, to lead us astray into by-paths.

If we live in any way of sin, we shall thereby *provoke God* to anger, and bring guilt upon our own souls. Neither will it excuse us that we were not sensible how evil that way was in which we walked; that we did not consider it; that we were blind as to any evil in it. We contract guilt not only by living in those ways which we know, but in those which we *might* know to be sinful, if we were but sufficiently concerned to know what is sinful and what not, and to examine ourselves, and search our own hearts and ways.

It would show a great irreverence in any person towards a king, if he should not care how he came into his presence, and if he should come in a sordid habit, and in a very indecent manner. How much more horrid irreverence doth it show, for persons willingly and allowedly to defile themselves with that filth which God infinitely hates, and so frequently to come into the presence of God!... They show by their practices, that they have no regard to Christ; and that they had rather have their lusts gratified, than to be fed with his spiritual food: they show, that they desire not any assimilation to Christ, but to be different from him, and of an opposite character to him: they show, that instead of desiring communion with Christ, they are his resolved and allowed enemies, wilfully acting the part of enemies to Christ, dishonouring him, and promoting the interest of Satan against him. Now, what can this be else but mockery, to make a show of great respect, reverence, love, and obedience, and at the same time wilfully to declare the reverse in actions. If a rebel or traitor should send addresses to his king, making a show of great loyalty and fidelity, and should all the while openly, and in the king's sight, carry on designs of dethroning him, how could his addresses be considered as any other than mockery?

If there be any evil or faultiness in sin against God, there is certainly infinite evil: for if it be any fault at all, it has an infinite aggravation, viz. that it is against an infinite object. If it be ever so small upon other accounts, yet if it be anything, it has one infinite dimension; and so is an infinite evil.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have

no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies.

Consider how you have promoted others' damnation. Many of you, by the bad examples you have set, by corrupting the minds of others, by your sinful conversation, by leading them into or strengthening them in sin, and by the mischief you have done in human society other ways that might be mentioned, have been guilty of those things that have tended to others' damnation. You have heretofore appeared on the side of sin and Satan, and have strengthened their interest, and have been many ways accessory to others' sins, have hardened their hearts, and thereby have done what has tended to the ruin of their souls....Seeing therefore you have had no more regard to others' salvation, and have promoted their damnation, how justly might God leave you to perish yourself!

How sensual have you been! Are there not some here that have debased themselves below the dignity of human nature, by wallowing in sensual filthiness, as swine in the mire, or as filthy vermin feeding with delight on rotten carrion? What intemperance have some of you been guilty of! How much of your precious time have you spent at the tavern, and in drinking companies, when you ought to have been at home seeking God and your salvation in your families and closets!.. And what abominable lasciviousness have some of you been guilty of! How have you indulged yourself from day to day, and from night to night, in all manner of unclean imaginations! Has not your soul been filled with them, till it has become a hold of foul spirits, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird? What foul-mouthed persons have some of you been, often in lewd and lascivious talk and unclean songs, wherein were things not fit to be spoken! And such company, where such conversation has been carried on, has been your delight. And with what unclean acts and practices have you defiled yourself! God and your own consciences know what abominable lasciviousness you

have practised in things not fit to be named, when you have been alone; when you ought to have been reading, or meditating, or on your knees before God in secret prayer. And how have you corrupted others, as well as polluted yourselves! What vile uncleanness have you practised in company! What abominations have you been guilty of in the dark!... Now, can you think when you have thus behaved yourself, that God is obliged to show you mercy? Are you not after all this ashamed to talk of its being hard with God to cast you off? Does it become one who has lived such a life to open his mouth to excuse himself, to object against God's justice in his condemnation, or to complain of it as hard in God not to give him converting and pardoning grace, and make him his child, and bestow on him eternal life?

There are many who contribute to their own children's damnation, by neglecting their education, by setting them bad examples, and bringing them up in sinful ways. They take some care of their bodies, but take little care of their poor souls; they provide for them bread to eat, but deny them the bread of life, that their famishing souls stand in need of.

Some, who cover their sin with specious show, who put on a face of religion, and a demure countenance and behaviour... Notwithstanding all their fair show, and good external carriage, they despise God in their hearts, and have the weapons of war about them, though they are secret enemies, and carry their swords under their skirts. They have most proud, stubborn, and rebellious hearts, which are ready to rise in opposition, to contend with him, and to find fault with his dispensations. Their hearts are full of pride, enmity, stubbornness, and blasphemy, which work in them many ways, while they sit under the preaching of the word, and while the spirit of God is striving with them; and they always continue to oppose and resist God as long as they live in the world; they never lay down the weapons of their rebellion. But God hath undertaken to deal with them and to subdue them; and those proud and stubborn hearts, which will not yield to the power of God's word, shall be broken by the power of his hand. If they will not be willing subjects to the golden sceptre, and will not yield to the attractives of his love, they shall be subject to the force of the iron rod, whether they will or no. Them that proudly set up their own righteousness, and their own wills against God, God hath undertaken to bring down; and without doubt, it will be done. He hath undertaken to make those who are now regardless of God, regard him.

That the members of the church do especially become visibly wicked, when they remain *impenitent* in their sins, after proper means used to reclaim them. Merely being guilty of any gross sin, is a stumbling-block to charity, unless repentance immediately succeed; but especially when the guilty person remains obstinate and contumacious; in such a case he is most clearly a visibly wicked person, and therefore to be dealt with as such; to be cast out into the wicked world, the kingdom of Satan, where he appears to belong.—Nor is contumacy in *gross* sins only a sufficient ground of excommunication. In the text the apostle commands us to inflict this censure, not only on those who are guilty of the gross sins of fornication, idolatry, and drunkenness, but also on those who are guilty of covetousness, railing, and extortion, which, at least in some degrees of them, are too generally esteemed no very heinous crimes...That the church may be kept *pure*, and the ordinances of God not be defiled.

If you tolerate visible wickedness in your members, you will greatly *dishonour* God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the religion which you profess, the church in general, and yourselves in particular. As those members of the church who practise wickedness, bring dishonour upon the whole body, so do those who tolerate them in it. The language of it is, that God doth not require holiness in his servants; that Christ doth not require it in his disciples; that the religion of the gospel is not a holy religion; that the church is not a body of holy servants of God; and that this church, in particular, hath no regard to holiness or true virtue.