

On Sin

by Richard Baxter

Richard Baxter's sermon emphasizes the intrinsic evil of sin and its profound impact on our relationship with God and creation.

Scripture: Proverbs 6:16, Proverbs 14:12, Ezekiel 18:20, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 6:18, Galatians 5:19, James 4:17, 1 John 1:9, 1 John 2:16

Topics: "Sin And Guilt", "Gods Holiness"

Description

Richard Baxter, a Puritan preacher, delves into the great sinfulness of sin, emphasizing the intrinsic evil of sin itself and its various implications. He highlights how sin is a violation of God's perfect law, a denial of His authority, and a contempt of His wisdom, goodness, and holiness. Baxter also explains how sin leads to a practical atheism, idolatry, and a disregard for God's mercy, love, and grace. Ultimately, sin is portrayed as a moral destruction that affects not only the individual soul but also the entire creation, disrupting the harmony and order of the world.

Transcript

Richard Baxter (1615-1691) was a Puritan preacher. This portion comes from a massive volume entitled "A Christian Directory" which deals with a multitude of very practical and spiritual issues in the believer's life. This particular excerpt is on the subject of the great sinfulness of sin.

Labour clearly to understand the evil of sin, both intrinsical in itself, and its aggravations and effects. When you have found out where it is, and wherein it doth consist, find out the malignity and odiousness of it. I have heard some Christians complain that they read much to show them the evil of sin in its effects, but meet with few that show them its evil in itself sufficiently. But, if you see not the evil of sin in itself, as well as in the effects, it will but tempt you to think God unjust in over-punishing it; and it will keep you from the principal part of true repentance and mortification; which lieth in hating sin, as sin. I shall therefore show you, wherein the intrinsical malignity of sin consisteth.

1. Sin is (formally) the violation of the perfect, holy, righteous law of God.
2. It is a denial or contempt of the authority, or governing power, of God; as if we said, Thou shalt not be our Governor in this.

3. It is a usurping the sovereign power to ourselves of governing ourselves, in that act; for when we refuse God's government, we set up ourselves in his stead, and so make gods of ourselves as to ourselves, as if we were self-sufficient, independent, and had right hereto.
4. It is a denying or contempt of the wisdom of God, as if he had unwisely made us a law which is unmeet to rule us.
5. It is a setting up of our folly in the place of God's wisdom, and preferring it before him; as if we were wiser to know how to govern ourselves, and to know what is fittest and best for us now to do, than God is.
6. It is a contempt of the goodness of God, as he is the maker of the law; as if he had not done that which is best, but that which may be corrected or contradicted, and there were some evil in it to be avoided.
7. It is a preferring our naughtiness before his goodness, as if we would do it better, or choose better what to do.
8. It is a contempt or denial of the holiness and purity of God, which sets him against sin, as light is against darkness.
9. It is a violation of God's propriety or dominion, robbing him of the use and service of that which is absolutely and totally his own.
10. It is a claiming of propriety in ourselves, as if we were our own, and might do with ourselves as we list.
11. It is a contempt of the gracious promises of God, by which he allured and bound us to obedience.
12. It is a contempt of the dreadful threatenings of God, by which he would have restrained us from evil.
13. It is a contempt or denial of the dreadful day of judgment, in which an account must be given of that sin.
14. It is a denying of God's veracity, and giving him the lie; as if he were not to be believed in all his predictions, promises, and threats.
15. It is a contempt of all the present mercies, (which are innumerable and great) by which God obligeth and encourageth us to obey.
16. It is a contempt of our own afflictions, and his chastisements of us, by which he would drive us from our sins.
17. It is a contempt of all the examples of his mercies on the obedient, and his terrible judgments on the disobedient, (men and devils) by which he warned us not to sin.
18. It is a contempt of the person, office, sufferings, and grace of Jesus Christ, who came to save us from our sins, and to destroy the works of the devil; being contrary to his bloodshed, authority, and healing work.
19. It is a contradicting, fighting against, and in that act prevailing against the sanctifying office and work of the Holy Ghost, that moveth us against sin, and to obedience.

20. It is a contempt of holiness, and a defacing, in that measure, the image of God upon the soul, or a rejecting it; a villifying of all those graces which are contrary to the sin.
21. It is a pleasing of the devil, the enemy of God and us, and an obeying him before God.
22. It is the fault of a rational creature, that had reason given him to do better.
23. It is all willingly done and chosen by a free agent, that could not be constrained to it.
24. It is a robbing God of the honour and pleasure which he should have had in our obedience; and the glory which we should bring him before the world.
25. It is a contempt of the omnipresence and omniscience of God, when we will sin against him before his face, when he stands over us, and seeth all that we do.
26. It is a contempt of the greatness and almightiness of God, that we dare sin against him who is so great, and able to be avenged on us.
27. It is a wrong to the mercifulness of God, when we go out of the way of mercy, and put him to use the way of justice and severity, who delighteth not in the death of sinners, but rather that they obey, repent and live.
28. It is a contempt of the attractive love of God, who should be the end, and felicity, and pleasure of the soul. As if all that love and goodness of God were not enough to draw or keep the heart to him, and to satisfy us and make us happy; or, he were not fit to be our delight. And it showeth the want of love to God, for if we loved him rightly we should willingly obey him.
29. It is a setting up the sordid creature before the Creator, and dung before heaven, as if it were more worthy of our love and choice, and fitter to be our delight; and the pleasure of sin were better for us than the glory of heaven.
30. In all which it appeareth, that it is a practical atheism, in its degree; a taking down God, or denying him to be God and a practical idolatry, setting up ourselves and other creatures in his stead.
31. It is a contempt of all the means of grace, which are all to bring us to obedience, and keep us or call us from our sins: prayer, sacraments, &c.
32. It is a contempt of the love and labours of the ministers of Christ; a disobeying them, grieving them, and frustrating their hopes and the labours of their lives.
33. It is a debasing of reason, the superior faculty of the soul, and a setting up of the flesh or inferior faculties, like setting dogs to govern men, or the horse to rule the rider.
34. It is a blinding of reason, and a misusing the noblest faculties of the soul, and frustrating them of the use and ends which they were made for; and so it is the disorder, monstrosity, sickness, or death of the soul.
35. It is, in its measure, the image of the devil upon the soul, who is the father of sin; and therefore the most odious deformity of the soul; and this where the Holy Ghost should dwell, and the image and delight of God should be.

36. It is the moral destruction not only of the soul, but of the whole creation, so far as the creatures are appointed as the means to bring or keep us unto God; for the means, as a means, is destroyed when it is not used to its end. A ship is useless if no one be carried in it. A watch, as such, is useless, when not used to show the hour of the day. All the world, as it is the book that should teach us the will of God, is cast by, when that use is cast by. Nay, sin useth the creature against God which should have been used for him.

37. It is a contradicting of our own confessions and professions; a wronging of our consciences; a violation of our covenants and self-obligations to God.

38. It is a preferring of time before eternity, and regarding things of a transitory nature, and a moment's pleasure, before that which never shall have end.

39. It is a making a breach in the harmony and order of the world; as the dislocation or deformity of a particular member, is the trouble and deformity of all the body, because the comeliness and welfare of the whole, containeth the comeliness, proportion, and welfare of all the parts. And as the dislocation or breaking of one part in a watch or clock, is against the use of all the engine; so every man being a part of the kingdom of God, doth by sin make a breach in the order of the whole; and also giveth an ill example to other parts, and makes himself unserviceable to the body; and dishonoureth the whole body with the blot of rebellion; and lets in judgment on the world; and kindleth a consuming fire in the place where he liveth; and is cruel and injurious to others.

40. Sin is not only a preferring the body before the soul, but it is also an unmercifulness or cruelty against ourselves, both soul and body, and so is contrary to the true use of the indelible principle of self-love; for it is a wounding and abusing the soul and defiling the body in this life, and casting both on the wrath of God, and into the flames of hell hereafter, or a dangerous venturing them into the way of endless damnation and despair, and a contempt of those insufferable torments. All these parts of malignity and poison are intrinsical to sin, and found in the very nature of it.

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