

MR. JOHN BUNYAN'S DYING SAYINGS

OF SIN

Sin is the great block and bar to our happiness, the procurer of all miseries to man, both here and hereafter: take away sin and nothing can hurt us: for death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, is the wages of it.

Sin, and man for sin, is the object of the wrath of God. How dreadful, therefore, must his case be who continues in sin! For who can bear or grapple with the wrath of God?

No sin against God can be little, because it is against the great God of heaven and earth; but if the sinner can find out a little God, it may be easy to find out little sins.

Sin turns all God's grace into wantonness; it is the dare of his justice, the rape of his mercy, the jeer of his patience, the slight of his power, and the contempt of his love.¹

Take heed of giving thyself liberty of committing one sin, for that will lead thee to another; till, by an ill custom, it become natural.

To begin a sin, is to lay a foundation for a continuance; this continuance is the mother of custom, and impudence at last the issue.

The death of Christ giveth us the best discovery of ourselves, in what condition we were, in that nothing could help us but that; and the most clear discovery of the dreadful nature of our sins. For if sin be so dreadful a thing as to wring the heart of the Son of God, how shall a poor wretched sinner be able to bear it?

¹ Among these truly remarkable sayings, so characteristic of our great author, this of the fearful nature of sin is peculiarly striking; it is worthy of being imprinted on every Christian's heart, to keep alive a daily sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.—Ed.

OF AFFLICTION

Nothing can render affliction so insupportable as the load of sin: would you, therefore, be fitted for afflictions, be sure to get the burden of your sins laid aside, and then what afflictions soever you may meet with will be very easy to you.

If thou canst hear and bear the rod of affliction which God shall lay upon thee, remember this lesson—thou art beaten that thou mayest be better.

The Lord useth his flail of tribulation to separate the chaff from the wheat.

The school of the cross is the school of light; it discovers the world's vanity, baseness, and wickedness, and lets us see more of God's mind. Out of dark affliction comes a spiritual light.

In times of affliction we commonly meet with the sweetest experiences of the love of God.

Did we heartily renounce the pleasures of this world, we should be very little troubled for our afflictions; that which renders an afflicted state so insupportable to many is because they are too much addicted to the pleasures of this life, and so cannot endure that which makes a separation between them.

OF REPENTANCE AND COMING TO CHRIST

The end of affliction is the discovery of sin, and of that to bring us to a Saviour. Let us therefore, with the prodigal, return unto him, and we shall find ease and rest.

A repenting penitent, though formerly as bad as the worst of men, may, by grace, become as good as the best.

To be truly sensible of sin is to sorrow for displeasing of God; to be afflicted that he is displeased by us more than that he is displeased with us.

Your intentions to repentance, and the neglect of that soul-saving duty, will rise up in judgment against you.

Repentance carries with it a Divine rhetoric, and persuades Christ to forgive multitudes of sins committed against him.

Say not with thyself, To-morrow I will repent; for it is thy duty to do it daily.

The gospel of grace and salvation is above all doctrines the most dangerous, if it be received in word only by graceless men; if it be not attended with a sensible need of a Saviour, and bring them to him. For such men as have only the notion of it, are of all men most miserable; for by reason of their knowing more than heathens, this shall only be their final portion, that they shall have greater stripes.

OF PRAYER

Before you enter into prayer, ask thy soul these questions—1. To what end, O my soul, art thou retired into this place? Art thou not come to discourse the Lord in prayer? Is he present; will he hear thee? Is he merciful; will he help thee? Is thy business slight; is it not concerning the welfare of thy soul? What words wilt thou use to move him to compassion?

To make thy preparation complete, consider that thou art but dust and ashes, and he the great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that clothes himself with light as with a garment; that thou art a vile sinner, he a holy God; that thou art but a poor crawling worm, he the omnipotent Creator.

In all your prayers forget not to thank the Lord for his mercies.

When thou prayest, rather let thy hearts be without words, than thy words without a heart.

Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer.

The spirit of prayer is more precious than treasures of gold and silver.

Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan.

OF THE LORD'S DAY, SERMONS, AND WEEK DAYS

Have a special care to sanctify the Lord's day; for as thou keepest it, so it will be with thee all the week long.

Make the Lord's day the market for thy soul; let the whole day be spent in prayer, repetitions, or meditations; lay aside the affairs of the other part of the week; let thy sermon thou hast heard be converted into prayer: Shall God allow thee six days, and wilt not thou afford him one?

In the church, be careful to serve God; for thou art in his eyes, and not in man's.

Thou mayest hear sermons often, and do well in practicing what thou hearest; but thou must not expect to be told thee in a pulpit all that thou oughtest to do, but be studious in searching the Scriptures, and reading good books; what thou hearest may be forgotten, but what thou readest may better be retained.

Forsake not the public worship of God, lest God forsake thee, not only in public, but in private.

In the week days, when thou risest in the morning, consider, 1. Thou must die. 2. Thou mayest die that minute. 3. What will become of thy soul. Pray often. At night consider, 1. What sins thou hast committed. 2. How often thou hast prayed. 3. What hath thy mind been bent upon. 4. What hath been thy dealing. 5. What thy conversation. 6. If thou callest to mind the errors of the day, sleep not without a confession to God, and a hope of pardon. Thus every morning and evening make up thy accounts with Almighty God, and thy reckoning will be the less at last.

OF THE LOVE OF THE WORLD

Nothing more hinders a soul from coming to Christ, than a vain love of the world; and till a soul is freed from it, it can never have a true love for God.

What are the honours and riches of this world, when compared to the glories of a crown of life?

Love not the world; for it [the love of the world] is a moth in a Christian's life.

To despise the world is the way to enjoy heaven; and blessed are they who delight to converse with God by prayer.

What folly can be greater than to labour for the meat that perisheth, and neglect the food of eternal life?

God or the world must be neglected at parting time, for then is the time of trial.

To seek yourself in this world is to be lost; and to be humble is to be exalted.

The epicure that delighteth in the dainties of this world, little thinketh that those very creatures will one day witness against him.

OF SUFFERING

It is not every suffering that makes a martyr, but suffering for the Word of God after a right manner; that is, not only for righteousness, but for righteousness' sake; not only for truth, but out of love to truth; not only for God's Word, but according to it: to wit, in that holy, humble, meek manner, as the Word of God requireth.

It is a rare thing to suffer aright, and to have my spirit in suffering bent only against God's enemy, sin; sin in doctrine, sin in worship, sin in life, and sin in conversation.

The devil, nor men of the world, can kill thy righteousness, or love to it but by thy own hand; or separate that and thee asunder without thy own act. Nor will he that doth indeed suffer for the sake of it, or out of love he bears thereto, be tempted to exchange it, for the good will of all the world.

I have often thought that the best of Christians are found in the worst of times. And I have thought again that one reason why we are no better, is because God purges us no more. Noah and Lot, who so holy as they in the time of their afflictions? And yet who so idle as they in the time of their prosperity?

OF DEATH AND JUDGMENT

As the devil labours by all means to keep out other things that are good, so to keep out of the heart as much as in him lies, the thoughts of passing from this life into another world; for he knows if he can but keep them from the serious

thoughts of death, he shall the more easily keep them in their sins.

Nothing will make us more earnest in working out the work of our salvation, than a frequent meditation of mortality; nothing hath greater influence for the taking off our hearts from vanities, and for the begetting in us desires after holiness.

O sinner, what a condition wilt thou fall into when thou departest this world; if thou depart unconverted, thou hadst better have been smothered the first hour thou wast born; thou hadst better have been plucked one limb from another; thou hadst better have been made a dog, a toad, a serpent, than to die unconverted, and this thou wilt find true if thou repent not.

A man would be counted a fool to slight a judge, before whom he is to have a trial of his whole estate.² The trial we have before God is of otherguise importance,³ it concerns our eternal happiness or misery; and yet dare we affront him?

The only way for us to escape that terrible judgment, is to be often passing a sentence of condemnation upon ourselves here. When the sound of the trumpet shall be heard, which shall summon the dead to appear before the tribunal of God, the righteous shall hasten out of their graves with joy to meet their Redeemer in the clouds; others shall call to the hills and mountains to fall upon them, to cover them from the sight of their Judge; let us therefore in time be posing⁴ ourselves which of the two we shall be.

OF THE JOYS OF HEAVEN

There is no good in this life but what is mingled with some evil; honours perplex, riches disquiet, and pleasures ruin health. But in heaven we shall find blessings in their purity,

² Judges in those days were often biased by personal feelings, and in some cases even by bribes.—Ed.

³ Otherguise importance'; another manner of importance.—Ed.

⁴ 'Posing,' questioning closely, putting to a stand.—*Imperial Dictionary*.—Ed.

without any ingredient to embitter, with everything to sweeten them.

O! who is able to conceive the inexpressible, inconceivable joys that are there? None but they who have tasted of them. Lord, help us to put such a value upon them here, that in order to prepare ourselves for them, we may be willing to forego the loss of all those deluding pleasures here.

How will the heavens echo of joy, when the Bride, the Lamb's wife, shall come to dwell with her husband for ever?

Christ is the desire of nations, the joy of angels, the delight of the Father; what solace then must that soul be filled with, that hath the possession of him to all eternity?

O! what acclamations of joy will there be, when all the children of God shall meet together, without fear of being disturbed by the antichristian and Cainish brood!

Is there not a time coming when the godly may ask the wicked what profit they have in their pleasure? what comfort in their greatness? and what fruits in all their labour?

If you would be better satisfied what the beatifical vision means, my request is that you would live holily, and go and see.

OF THE TORMENTS OF HELL

Heaven and salvation is not surely more promised to the godly than hell and damnation is threatened to, and shall be executed on, the wicked.

When once a man is damned, he may bid adieu to all pleasures.

Oh! who knows the power of God's wrath? none but damned ones.

Sinners' company are the devil and his angels, tormented in everlasting fire with a curse.

Hell would be a kind of paradise if it were not worse than the worst of this world.

As different as grief is from joy, as torment from rest, as terror from peace; so different is the state of sinners from that of saints in the world to come.

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