

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 6.-Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof.

VI. Every sin, both Originall and Actuell, being a transgression of the righteous Law of God, and contrary thereunto,¹ doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner,² whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God,³ and curse of the Law,⁴ and so made subject to death,⁵ with all miseries spiritual,⁶ temporal,⁷ and eternal.⁸

Question 1.—*What is “actual” sin, in contradistinction from “original” sin?*

Answer.—Actual sin is any want of conformity to God’s law, in our actions, while Original sin is inherent—it is the want of conformity of our nature and heart to that law.

Question 2.—*What classes of sins are included in actual sin?*

Answer.—All classes of sins committed, or duties omitted, under the influence or operation of a rational mind; as sins in bodily actions, in words, and in thoughts, in will and in active affections; and sins of omission as well as of commission. There are sins of *omission and commission*. A sin of *omission* is committed whenever one does not perform that which is commanded. Although many neither give heed to this nor are disturbed hereby, it is a great sin, for it proceeds from unwillingness and lovelessness in relation to the will of God. The apostle denominates both omission and commission as sin. “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin,” James 4:17. It is noteworthy that only sins of omission are recorded as causes for damnation in Matthew 25:42, 43. A sin of *commission* is committed when one does that which is forbidden, or whenever one performs that which is good in and of itself in an evil manner or with an ulterior motive. “He that committeth sin is of the devil,” 1 John 3:8.

There are sins which are committed:

(1.) in *thoughts*, which are not concealed from the all-seeing eye of God, and are hated by Him: “An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,” Prov. 6:18;

(2.) in *words*, “But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” Mat. 12:36;

(3.) in *deeds*, “Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” Mat. 7:23;

(4.) in *gestures* made with eyes, face, hands and feet, “A naughty person, a wicked man . . . winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers,” Prov. 6:12, 13.

Sins committed in thoughts are the most numerous; however, those committed in deed excel in magnitude, since they occur in conjunction with the thoughts, doubling the

¹ 1 John 3:4.

² Rom. 2:15; 3:9, 19.

³ Eph. 2:3.

⁴ Gal. 3:10.

⁵ Rom. 6:23.

⁶ Eph. 4:18.

⁷ Rom. 8:20; Lam. 3:39.

⁸ Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:9.

magnitude of the sin. They are committed with more premeditation and are injurious to others.

Question 3.—*From what does actual sin proceed?*

Answer.—From sin inherent—Original—Matt. 15:19. Original sin produces all kinds of *actual sins*. This is confirmed in James 1:14, 15, where we read, “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.” Since lust draws away, entices, and brings forth sin, it is sin itself. That which is not sin cannot generate sin. The apostle also expressly denominates covetousness as sin, Rom. 7:7. When covetousness is said to bring forth sin, this refers to actual sins.

Question 4.—*Is not actual sin more aggravated than merely inherent, or Original, sin?*

Answer.—Yes. It is an addition to sin inherent; and the Scriptures designate actual sin as distinct from sin inherent, and for the purpose of setting forth its aggravations; as Matt. 15:19; Jas. 1:15.

Question 5.—*Does not every sin, both Original and Actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, bring in its own nature guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and the curse of the law; and made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal?*

Answer.—Yes. Rom. 2:15; 3:9, 19; Eph. 2:3; Gal. 3:10; Eph. 4:18; Rom. 8:20; Lam. 3:39; Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:9. Thus, the Papists are wrong who maintain that all sin is not contrary to the law of God, nor transgressions thereof. They also do err who deny that every sin is mortal and deserving of eternal punishment. Because 1.) All sins deserve eternal death, Rom. 6:23; 8:6, 13; Ezek. 18:4. 2.) Every sin is a transgression of the law, 1 John 3:4. 3.) Whoever keeps the whole law, excepting in one only point, is guilty of all, Jas. 2:10, 11, and therefore he deserves eternal punishment. 4.) Those sins of infirmity and ignorance, which the saints are subject to, and which the Papists call venial sins, will not suffer them to stand in Judgment before God, nor can the saints be justified from them, except by faith; and therefore in strict justice, they merit, and deserve hell, Ps. 143:2; 130:3, 4, 8. 5.) God commanded believers under the Law, to offer typical sacrifices, for making a propitiation for such sins; and Christ did really by his own precious blood, purge them away (for by no less price could they be purged), he being made a curse for them, that he might liberate those from the curse of the Law, which they deserved for such sins, as well as others, Lev. 4:2, 3, 14, 15, 20, 22, 24, 31; 5:17, 18; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 10:10, 12, 14; 9:14, 22; 1 John 1:7, 9; Eph. 5:25-27; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. 6.) Every sin is against the supremest Law-giver, against his Holiness and Goodness, against his infinite Majesty; and flows from a formal and virtual contempt of God; and therefore the least sin, cannot but deserve God’s wrath and curse eternally, Jas. 2:10, 11; Lev. 10:3; 11:44, 45; 1 John 3:4; Eph. 5:6.