

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 11.-Of Justification.

V. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified¹: and, although they can never fall from the state of Justification²; yet, they may by their sins, fall under Gods fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his countenance restored unto them, untill they humble themselves, confesse their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance³.

Question 1.—*Does God continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified?*

Answer.—Yes. Matt. 6:12; 1 John 1:7, 9; 2:1, 2. Remission of sins does not consist in a removal of the corruption or depraved quality, but in a gratuitous pardon of the criminality and guilt arising from it. All the believer's sins are pardoned in justification, Ps. 103:3. This includes sins yet to be committed, as appears from the following: 1.) From texts which expressly declare the forgiveness of all sins, Acts 13:39; Ps. 103:3, Col. 2:13. 2.) From the assurance that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, Rom. 8:1. 3.) From the nature and use of the sacraments, as seals of blessings of the covenant of grace. They do not seal our interest in a part, but in all the blessings of salvation, among which is pardon, Acts 2:38; Matt. 26:28. 4.) From the fact that the believer in Christ is delivered from all the claims of the law as a covenant, Gal. 2:16. 5.) Christ made full satisfaction for all the sins of his people; in justification this satisfaction is imputed to them, and on this ground they are set free from all liability to condemnation, or judicial punishment in justification; and this must apply to future sins, as well as to the past, 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:9.

Question 2.—*Can those once justified fall from the state of justification?*

Answer.—No. Luke 22:32; John 10:28; Heb. 10:14. As justification is an act completed at once, so those who are justified cannot come into condemnation, Rom. 8:1. Justification is absolute and not conditional, Rom. 3:24. The perpetuity of this privilege is clearly implied in many of the promises of Scripture, John 11:25; 5:24. Those whom God predestinates to be conformed to the image of his Son, he calls; and whom he calls he justifies, and whom he justifies, them also he glorifies, Rom. 8:30. Moreover, in the assurance that all who receive justification will continue in that state, the apostle challenges in Rom. 8:33, 34. However, what if these justified persons were to cease to believe and obey the gospel? Would not the sentence of condemnation return, and they fall under the weight of God's vengeance? Nevertheless, this cannot happen, Rom. 11:29. God has said of all those with whom he makes his new and everlasting covenant, that he will uphold them in their state of justification, Jer. 31:33; 32:40; Heb. 8:12; 1 Pet. 1:5; John 10:28.

Not only is justification said to be apart from works, it is said to be accomplished for the ungodly, Rom. 4:5; 5:6. As no good works can be granted which precede this justification

¹ Matt. 6:12; 1 John 1:7, 9; 2:1, 2.

² Luke 22:32; John 10:28; Heb. 10:14.

³ Ps. 89:31-33; 51:7-12; 32:5; Matt. 26:75; 1 Cor. 11:30, 32; Luke 1:20.

as causes, but only follow as effects and fruit springing from the faith of remission, Luke 7:47; 1 Tim. 1:5; so, too, the sins of those justified, committed after the time of their justification, being works (albeit sinful) cannot affect the act and declaration of God toward those who have once exercised faith in Christ, 2 Tim. 2:13. They are not purified and then justified but they are justified and the same faith which justifies is that which purifies the hearts of believers, Acts 15:9. It is by the power of this justification that God declares his power in the midst of our weakness, 2 Cor. 12:9.

All of which demonstrate that justification is an act of God's free grace and not in any way conditioned by works that we have done, Tit. 3:5. This possibility of falling from a state of justification is, therefore, ruled out, Mal. 3:6.

Question 3.—Can those who are justified, by reason of their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not having the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance?

Answer.—Yes. Ps. 89:31-33; 51:7-12; 32:5; Matt. 26:75; 1 Cor. 11:30, 32; Luke 1:20. So, then, the Antinomians err, who maintain, that God's love and favor towards those that are once justified, cannot consist with his anger and chastisement towards them. 1.) Because Christ says, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, Rev. 3:19. 2.) Because David was chastened for his adultery and murder, 2 Sam. 12:10. 3.) Because the Lord says, If my children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes, Ps. 89:30, 31. 4.) Because God was provoked with the sins of the Corinthians, for which he punished them, 1 Cor. 10:22 and 11:30.