

## CONFESSION OF FAITH.

### CHAPTER 15.-Of Repentance unto Life.

IV. As there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation<sup>1</sup>, so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent<sup>2</sup>.

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Question 1.—*Are there any sins so small that they do not deserve damnation?*

*Answer.*—No. Rom. 6:23; 5:17; Matt. 12:36. Thus the Romanists err maintaining that there are some sins venial and others mortal. The distinction is based on the fact that Scripture speaks of various sins and punishments, Matt. 5:22; 7:3; 23:23; Luke 6:41; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; sometimes links death to them, Rom. 1:32; 1 Cor. 6:9; Jas. 5:20; 1 John 3:14; yet in many cases continues to recognize believers as such, even though they make many mistakes, Prov. 24:16; Matt. 1:19; Luke 1:6; Jas. 3:2; further, on the consideration that there are curable and incurable diseases, and that there are minor insults that do not destroy a friendship.

They are confuted because that the least sin deserves punishment is obvious, Ezek. 18:20. The moral law is moral in every element, and it is of the essence of that which is moral that it is obligatory, and that its violation is deserving of reprobation, Gal. 6:7. Hence “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all,” because the law is an organic whole, Jas. 2:10. Whoever violates one commandment is in principle guilty of violating all of it, Matt. 5:17-19. It claims us totally—with heart and mind, soul and body, Matt. 22:37. To the law nothing is immaterial and small: cursed is the person who does not keep all that is written in the book of the law, Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10. Even the slightest violations of the law—an upsurge of anger, an impure desire, a redundant confirmation, an idle word, Matt. 5:22, 28, 37; 12:36; Eph. 5:4—are sins equal, in principle, to sinful deeds and therefore to sin as lawlessness, hostility against God.

That there is no sin so great that it can bring condemnation upon those that truly repent is also evident, because true repentance, as we have seen, is the fruit of regeneration, and no man is regenerated who is not also justified. Besides, true repentance includes faith, and faith unites to Christ and secures the imputation of his righteousness, and the righteousness of Christ of course cancels all possible sin, Rom. 8:1; 5:20. We acknowledge that while all sins, even the least, deserve the wrath of God forever; yet, some sins are in themselves, and by reason of their several aggravations, more heinous in the sight of God, John 19:11; Ezek. 8:6,13,15; 1 John 5:16; Ps. 78:17,32,56. Sins receive their aggravations from: 1.) The persons offending, Jer. 2:8; if they are of greater maturity, Job 32:7,9; Eccl. 4:13; if they are of greater experience or grace, 1 Kings 11:4,9; if their example is likely to be followed, Gal. 2:11-14; *etc.* 2.) The parties offended, Matt. 21:38,39; if immediately against God, 1 Sam. 2:25; Acts 5:4; Ps. 51:4; His attributes, Rom. 2:4; or worship, Mal. 1:8,14; *etc.* 3.) The nature and quality of the offence, Prov. 6:30-33; if against the express letter of the law, Ezra 9:10-12; 1 Kings 11:9,10; if it breaks many commandments and contains in it many sins, Col. 3:5; 1 Tim.

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. 6:23; 5:17; Matt. 12:36.

<sup>2</sup>Isa. 55:7; Rom. 8:1; Isa. 1:16,18.

6:10; Jos. 7:21; *etc.*4.) From the circumstance of time and place, 2 Kings 5:26; Jer. 7:10; Isa. 26:10; if on the Lord's day, Ezek. 23:37-39; or other times of divine worship, Isa. 58:3-5; Num. 25:6,7; *etc.*

Question 2.—*Is there any sin so great that it will bring damnation upon those who truly repent?*

*Answer.*—No. Isa. 55:7; Rom. 8:1; Isa. 1:16,18. Thus the Anabaptists, Novatians, and other heretics err, maintaining that if any after baptism, and grace received, fall into grievous sins, or offend willingly, there is no pardon remaining for them, even though they should repent. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because God, under the law, appointed daily sacrifices, even for sins committed willingly, Num. 28:3; Lev. 6:1-8. 2.) Because God, in the covenant of grace has promised, that He will not utterly take from them, with whom He is in covenant, his lovingkindness; even though they have broken His statutes, and not kept His commandments, Ps. 89:30-34. 3.) Because God invites the Galatians and Corinthians, who were guilty of apostacy, and of very many gross scandals, to repentance, from the hope of pardon, Gal. 3:1; 1:6; 4:19; 1 Cor. 1:11,12; 5:1,2,7,8; 2 Cor. 12:21. 4.) Because the apostle John says, even to such as have sinned willingly, after baptism, and grace received, If we truly repent and confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, 1 John 1:9; 2:12. 5.) Because David, after his "great transgression", and Peter, after denying of his Master, obtained pardon when they repented, 2 Sam. 12:13; John 21:19. Therefore there remains pardon to such as, after baptism, and grace received, have fallen, and repented.