

—Westminster Shorter Catechism—
Lesson 41—*Sin is Damnable by Nature, Q. 84*

Sin is Damnable by Nature

- I. *Every sin* deserves God’s wrath and curse.
 - A. Every sin is a breach of the law of God, 1Jn 3.4.
 - B. Every sin incurs guilt, Lev 5.17.
 - C. Every sin brings a curse on the sinner, Gal 3.10.
 - D. Every sin brings death and condemnation to the sinner, Ezk 18.4; Rom 5.12, 18; 6.23.
 - E. The law requires universal obedience, making every sin a breach of it, Gal 3.10.
 - F. Christ died for all the sins of the elect, Isa 53.5b; Heb 10.14; 1Pet 3.18; 1Jn 1.7. And if Christ suffered God’s wrath and curse for every sin of the elect, then every sin deserved it.
 - G. The least sin will condemn a man to eternal damnation (Gen 2.17; Rom 5.12); and every sin needs the blood of Christ to cleanse it or it’ll eternally ruin the sinner, Ps 130.3; Nah 1.6; Ezk 18.4.
 - H. “A man is spotted although he have but one stain; he is not clean unless he be all clean. A cup is broken if only the top is broken, but it is not entire unless every part of it be inviolate.” Taylor.
 - I. Just consider how apparently slight a fault it was for which Moses was kept out of Canaan and we can begin to see the infinite difference between the best of a sinful race and Him who was sinless, Heb 7.26-27; 1Pet 2.22.
- II. *Why* does every sin deserve God’s wrath and curse?
 - A. Every sin is by nature a kind of infinite evil which then deserves infinite punishment.
 1. Sin is an infinite evil by reason of the fact that the guilt and defilement of it is never taken away *unless* the Lord condescends in mercy to the sinner and removes it Himself by Christ’s blood.
 - a) There’s simply no way a defiled sinner can ever enter into God’s holy presence on his own terms to attempt pacification. “The least sin which we commit in deed, word, or thought, is death, without repentance.” Hooker
 2. Sin is an *infinite* evil in that it wrongs an *infinite* God. And since an *infinite* evil deserves an *infinite* punishment and the *finite* sinner is incapable of punishment infinite in value, his punishment is necessarily *infinite* in duration.
 - a) Sin wrongs God’s infinite sovereignty by casting off His sovereign authority and setting up the sinner’s will in place of His own, Js 2.10-11. It is a fighting against God.
 - b) Sin wrongs God’s infinite goodness by turning the good received from God against Him, Ex 20.1-2; Hos 2.5-9.
 - c) Sin wrongs God’s holiness, Hab 1.13. God cannot endure unholiness and yet sin brings unholiness into His presence, it sets itself up in the Holy of Holies and “compel” the Lord to behold it.
 - d) Sin breaks God’s law, the eternal rule of righteousness, and jumps over the hedge placed by God around all men, 1Jn 3.4.
 - B. The great evil of sin by nature, which makes it deserving of God’s wrath and curse (*Goodwin 4.153*).
 1. It’s *debased* the soul of man, the noblest creature under heaven, made to be fit for fellowship with God Himself, Lk 15.16.
 2. It’s *defiled* the soul of man, Mt 15.20. *One sin*, defiled the soul, *in an instant, totally, eternally*.
 - a) *One sin* defiled the soul of man in the fall of Adam, Rom 5.17.
 - b) It defiled it *in an instant*.
 - c) It defiled it *totally*. It began at the understanding and moved into the affections and will, sending a rottenness through the whole of man’s nature.
 - d) It defiled it *eternally*. Sin is a stain which no soap can wash out, Jer 2.22. There was once a flood of water that covered the whole world and washed away every sinner, but not one sin.

3. It's *robbed* man of God Himself, Isa 59.1-2; Hab 1.13; Isa 1.13. And to rob a man of God is rob him of all things.
4. It's *ruined* a whole world, that would be torn down for its uncleanness (Lev 14.44-45), had not Christ stepped in to redeem it, Rom 8.19-21.
5. It was the *founder* of hell, and laid the first cornerstone thereof.
6. It *contains* all evils in it and *causes* all evils that exist. God sowed nothing but good in the world. Sin sowed all the tares.
7. Sin is more evil than anything else could be.
 - a) God owns all other evils on earth (Amos 3.6), but not sin. Sin is an illegitimate.
 - b) Christ drank a cup of divine wrath to the dregs, but wouldn't drink one drop of sin, Mt 4.
 - c) The saints have refused the greatest goods the world can offer when they came by sin and embraced the greatest evils the world had to offer rather than embrace sin.
 - d) The devil is the father of lies, the epitome of wickedness and evil and damnation, and it was sin, one sin, that did it.
 - e) Nothing curses the creature but sin. The greatest of evils and calamities and miseries can't bring down the curses of heaven upon a man, but one sin can do it.
 - f) God hates nothing but sin.

III. What is God's wrath and curse?

- A. It is God's *displeasure* against the sinner, Ps 5.4-5. Sin makes the soul loathsome in God's sight and kindles a holy fire in His heart against the sinner.
- B. It is God's *dealing* with sinners as His *enemies*, Isa 33.14; Heb 12.29.
- C. It is God's *devoting* a man unto *destruction*, His tying a man to the stake as the target of God's vengeance so that His broken Law may empty all its arrows into him and all the miseries and plagues imaginable may meet on him, Dt 29.18-21.
- D. **Note:* This wrath is as holy and pure and righteous and just as God Himself. It has nothing of the passion and rage and blindness of sinful men, but only the pure, just, holy, and righteous character of God. The fire of God's wrath is not fueled by the wood and coals of men's anger, but only by the justice and holiness of God.

Inferences

- I. Let this commend the love of Christ in dying for sinners, Rom 5.8. If every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, then what must that flood of wrath and curse have been when Christ stood in the room of an elect world!
- II. Let this convince you of the evil that is in sin. There's more evil in the least sin than in the greatest suffering. Therefore, never say of any sin, that it is *but a little one*, for the least sin will make a man eternally miserable in hell. You cannot account that a *little* evil which exposes a man to *everlasting* wrath.
- III. *Inexpressibly terrible* is the deserving of many sins, and gross sins, when the least of them deserves God's wrath and curse. If idle words damn, and if lust damns, and if lying damns, and if coveting and murmuring damn, then what must a lifetime of sinning warrant, but a deep footing in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Flee from the wrath to come to the Lord Jesus Christ!
- IV. Let believers admire free grace, pardoning mercy, and that atoning blood, which secures them from bearing the desert of their sin, Ps 32.1; 103.1-5.
- V. Don't think lightly of your sins (though they cannot hurt you) when you see what great wrath and curse Christ suffered for your deliverance from them.
- VI. Sinners, be convinced of your absolute need for Christ. You must be *in Him* or you're ruined forever.