

## Westminster Confession of Faith: Session Sixteen

### *WCF 15 – Of Repentance unto Life*

“Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter” (2 Corinthians 7:10-11 NKJV).

#### **I. Introduction**

- a. Historical Import of Repentance  
*Roman Catholic Church and “Do Penance”*

*Martin Luther and “Repent”*

- b. The Relationship of Faith and Repentance

#### **II. WCF Chapter XV**

- a. *Its Source and Importance*  
2 Timothy 2:25
  
- b. *Its Nature*  
Disgust Over Sin, Not Just Consequences

Apprehension of God’s Mercy in Christ

Results in Turn from Sin and toward Righteousness

- c. *Its Necessity*  
Danger of Revivalism
  
- d. *Its Efficacy*  
Any Sin too Much for God’s Grace?

John 6:37

e. *Its Particularity*  
Not a Warning, but an Admonition

f. *Its Objects*  
God

Others

We also Bound to Forgive those Who Repent!

### III. Conclusion

“Keep up your repentance. Let it be a habit of mind you watch over to the last day of your life. Let it be a fire you never allow to burn low or to become dull. Keep up your repentance, if you love life. I do not want you to make a Christ of repentance, or to turn it into a bondage for your soul. I do not bid you to measure the degree of your justification by your repentance, or to suppose that your sins are not forgiven because your repentance is imperfect. Justification is one thing, and repentance is another. You must not confuse things that differ. It is only faith that justifies. It is only faith that lays hold of Christ. But for all that, keep a jealous watch over your repentance. Keep it up—keep it up, and let not the fire burn low. Whenever you find a slackness coming over your soul,—whenever you feel slow, and dull, and heavy, and cold, and careless about little sins, look to your own heart then, and take heed lest you fall.”<sup>1</sup>

### Helpful Resources

Hodge, Archibald Alexander. *A Commentary on the Confession of Faith*. Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1869; pp. 285-297.

———. *Outlines of Theology*. Rewritten and Enlarged. New York, NY: Hodder & Stoughton, 1878; pp. 487-495.

Ryle, John Charles. *Old Paths: Being Plain Statements of Some of the Weightier Matters of Christianity*. 4th ed. London: Charles J. Thynne, 1898; pp. 403-435.

Sproul, R. C. *Truths We Confess: A Systematic Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*. Revised Edition. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2019; pp. 332-353.

Van Dixhoorn, Chad. *Confessing the Faith: A Reader's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith*. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2014; pp. 193-202.

Watson, Thomas. *A Body of Divinity*. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958; pp. 353-357.

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<sup>1</sup> John Charles Ryle, *Old Paths: Being Plain Statements of Some of the Weightier Matters of Christianity*, 4th ed. (London: Charles J. Thynne, 1898), 434.