

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 17.-*Of the Perseverance of the Saints.*

I. They, whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally, nor finally, fall away from the state of Grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved¹.

Question 1.—*Can they whom God has accepted in his beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, either totally or finally fall away from the state of grace?*

Answer.—No, contrary to the Arminians and Pelagians. The foundations of the orthodox opinion are various: 1.) The election of God. This purpose is eternal and unchangeable, Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:11, the foundation firm, 2 Tim. 2:19, efficacious both as to faith and as to the means indissolubly joined together with the end, Rom. 8:29,30. Nor can an immanent act of God be rescinded or changed either by the Creator or by the creature, 1 Sam. 15:29. 2.) The nature of the covenant of grace, 2 Sam. 23:5. Since it is firm and immutable and can never be abrogated because it is founded upon God's grace alone and not on man's obedience, the blessings dependent upon it should also be perpetual and immutable; such as faith, justification and regeneration, which are its peculiar goods, Phil. 1:6. To this, Jeremiah testifies, Jer. 31:32,33; 32:40; which teaches that God will surely bring about the execution of the covenant. Here pertain numerous important promises concerning the guardianship and preservation of believers; Deut. 31:8; Heb. 13:5; Isa. 54:10; 59:21; Hos. 2:19; John 10:27-29; Matt. 16:18. 3.) The merit and efficacy of Christ, the Redeemer, who has purchased for believers by his sacrifice not an evanescent blessing, nor does he apply it mutably by his intercession in heaven. To this many Scriptures testify, John 6:37,39; 17:12; 14:19; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 12:2. Nor can his intercession be made void, John 11:42. 4.) The guardianship and sealing of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, who is given to us, ought to remain with us forever, John 14:16. Thus, sealing us unto the day of redemption, Eph. 1:13; 4:30. 5.) The nature of the gifts bestowed upon us by the Spirit. Since these are without repentance and eternal, they do not allow the believer adorned with them to fall either totally or finally, Rom. 11:29; 1 John 5:4; 1 Cor. 13:8; Rom. 5:5. 6.) The judgment, made in the Scripture concerning the apostate, as if wholly different from true believers has bearing upon this subject, 1 John 2:19.

Question 2.—*Shall they certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved?*

Answer.—Yes. 2 Pet. 1:10; 1 John 3:9. Thus, Papists, Socinians, Arminians and some of the Quakers err, maintaining that the saints may totally and finally fall away. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because the saints are built upon the rock, and not upon the sand, Matt. 7:24; 16:16,18. 2.) Because he that has begun a good work in the saints, will finish it, until the day of Jesus Christ, Phil. 1:6. 3.) Because Paul says nothing can separate us from the love of God, Rom. 8:35,38,39. 4.) Because they that fall away, have never had true justifying faith, Luke 8:13,16; 1 John 2:19. 5.) Because it is impossible for the elect to be seduced, Matt. 24:24. Impossible, not in respect of the will

¹Phil. 1:6; 2 Pet. 1:10; John 10:28,29; 1 John 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:5,9.

and power of the elect themselves, but in respect of the immutability of God's decree concerning them, and of his purpose keeping them powerfully against seduction, according to his promises, of which he cannot repent, John 10:28,29; Rom. 8:38,39; 1 Pet. 1:5,9. 6.) Because they that believe in the Son of God have life eternal, 1 John 5:13; John 6:47,54,58. And they that have passed from death unto life shall never hunger or thirst any more, John 6:35. 7.) Because God has promised in his covenant, that though he chastise his own children for their faults, yet he will never take away his mercy, and loving-kindness from them, Ps. 89:30-34; Jer. 32:38-40. 8.) Because that golden chain of redemption cannot be broken, Rom. 8:30. 9.) Because Christ says that he will lose none that the Father has given Him, John 6:39. 10.) Because we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. 1:5. 11.) Because he has prayed for us, that our faith fail not, Luke 22:32: John 17:20.