

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 7.-Of God's Covenant with Man.

III. Man, by his Fall having made himself incapable of Life by that Covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a Second¹, commonly called the Covenant of Grace; Wherein he freely offereth unto sinners Life and Salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them Faith in Him that they may be saved², and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto Life, his holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe³.

Question 1.—*Did man, by his Fall, make himself incapable of life by the Covenant of Works?*

Answer.—Yes. Man, by his Fall, lost communion with God, Gen. 3:8, 10, 24, and came under His wrath and curse, Eph. 2:2; Gal. 3:10, thus did man make himself incapable of attaining that life promised in the covenant of works becoming wholly unfit for that work, Rom. 3:20.

Question 2.—*Was the Lord pleased to make a second Covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Grace, with fallen man?*

Answer.—Yes. Gal. 3:21; Rom. 8:3; 3:20, 21; Gen. 3:15; Isa. 42:6. Man, being plunged into a fallen estate through Adam's first transgression, God of His mere good pleasure (*eudokia*), Eph. 1:11, was pleased to undertake and make a second covenant with man, which covenant is made sure in Christ, Heb. 9:15, 16. In this covenant of grace, the Lord freely offers unto sinners life and salvation through Jesus Christ, Isa. 55:1; Rev. 21:6; 22:17.

Question 3.—*Does this Covenant of Grace require any conditions?*

Answer.—The Arminian view is, that Adam having lost the promise and incurred the penalty of the covenant which demanded perfect obedience, Christ's death having made it consistent with the claims of absolute justice, God for Christ's sake introduces a new covenant, styled the covenant of grace, offering to all men individually the eternal life forfeited by Adam on the lowered and graciously possible condition of faith and evangelical obedience. According to this view, the new covenant is just as much a covenant of works as the old one was; the only difference is that the works demanded are far less difficult, and we are graciously aided in our endeavors to accomplish them, *cf.* Eccl. 2:11. According to this view, also, faith and evangelical obedience secure eternal life in the new covenant in the same way that perfect obedience did in the old covenant, Gen. 2:17.

The Orthodox distinguish. If the condition be taken antecedently and *a priori* for the meritorious cause and natural condition, the covenant of grace is rightly denied to be conditioned, *cf.* Rom. 6:15. It is wholly gratuitous, depending solely on the good will of God (*eudokia*) and not the merits of man, *cf.* Rom. 11:34. Nor is it founded in any sense

¹ Gal. 3:21; Rom. 8:3; Rom. 3:20, 21; Gen. 3:15; Isa. 42:6.

² Mark 16:15, 16; John 3:16; Rom. 10:6, 9; Gal. 3:11.

³ Ezek. 36:26, 27; John 6:44, 45.

upon the actions of man, but by the righteousness of Christ alone, Gal. 3:11. But, if taken *a posteriori* for the instrumental cause, receptive of the promises of the covenant, it cannot be denied that the covenant is conditional, John 8:24. 1.) It is proposed with an express condition, John 3:16, 36; Rom. 10:9; Acts 8:37; Mark 16:15, 16. 2.) Unless it was conditional, there would be no place for the threatenings in the gospel, *cf.* Heb. 6:4-6; Mark 16:16 (which could not be denounced except against those who neglected the prescribed condition)—for the neglect of faith and obedience cannot be culpable, if not required. 3.) Otherwise it would follow that God is bound in this covenant to man and not man to God (there being no reciprocal obligation implied), *cf.* Rom. 6:16.

Question 4.—*What is the condition of the Covenant of Grace?*

Answer.—The condition of the covenant of grace is faith, John 3:16; Rom. 1:16, 17; 10:9. Faith (taken instrumentally) can consist only with the grace of God (for which nothing but a reception is required, which is the proper action of faith, Rom. 5:17; John 1:12); hence Paul points out the receptive nature of this faith, Eph. 2:8, and excludes boasting, Rom. 3:27.

Question 5.—*Is this condition of the Covenant of Grace dependent upon the will of man?*

Answer.—No. God hath promised to give unto those whom He has chosen, by His Holy Spirit, that gift of faith whereby they are made willing to believe and embrace the offers of grace in the Gospel, Ezek. 36:26, 27; John 6:44, 45; Phil. 2:13.