

Second London Baptist Confession Chapter 20: The Gospel and the Extent of its Grace

Introduction

-Addition of This Chapter: to supplement the teaching of the WCF

-Revision in This Chapter (Par. 1):

BCF (original): *“In this promise the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.”*

BCF (revised): *“In this promise the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and [is] therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.”*

SD: *“In this promise the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and was therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.”*

-Theme of This Chapter: The Special Revelation of the Gospel

I. The Historical Inauguration of This Revelation (Par. 1)

-Its Occasion: *“Because the covenant of works was broken by sin and was unable to confer life...”*

-Its Form: *“God was pleased to proclaim the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman...”*; *“In this promise the gospel in its substance was revealed...”*

-Its Purposes: *“...as the means of calling the elect and producing in them faith and repentance...”*; *“...and made effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.”*

-Gen. 3:15; Eph. 2:12; Heb. 11:2, 13, 39

II. The Exclusive Instrument of This Revelation (Par. 2)

-Its Identification: *“This promise of Christ and of salvation through Him is revealed in the Word of God alone.”* (Rom. 1:17; 10:14, 15, 17)

-Its Implications: *“The works of creation and providence, when assisted only by the light of nature, do not reveal Christ or grace through Him, even in a general or obscure way. Much less are those without the revelation of Him in the promise or gospel enabled to attain saving faith or repentance by seeing these works of God.”* (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:19, 20)

III. The Sovereign Dispensation of This Revelation (Par. 3)

-Its Assertion: *“The gospel has been revealed to sinners in various times and in different places, along with the promises and precepts describing the obedience it requires. The particular nations and individuals who are granted this revelation are chosen solely according to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God.”* (Matt. 11:25, 26)

-Its Implication: *“This choice does not depend on any promise to those who demonstrate good stewardship of their natural abilities based on common light received apart from the gospel. No one has ever done this nor can anyone do so.”* (Rom. 3:10-12; 8:7, 8)

-Its Result: *“Therefore, in every age the preaching of the gospel to individuals and nations has been granted in widely varying degrees of expansion and contraction, according to the counsel of the will of God.”* (Rom. 9:16, 18)

IV. The Sufficiency of This Revelation (Par. 4)

-Its Assertion: *“The gospel is the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and it is abundantly sufficient for that purpose.”* (Rom. 1:16)

-Its Qualification: *“Yet to be born again, brought to life or regenerated, those who are dead in trespasses also must have an effectual, irresistible work of the Holy Spirit in every part of their souls to produce in them a new spiritual life. Without this no other means will bring about their conversion to God.”* (1 Thess. 1:5)

Practical Lessons