

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 19.-*Of the Law of God.*

II. This Law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten Commandments, and written in two Tables¹: the four first Commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six, our duty to man².

Question 1.—*After Man's fall, did this law continue to be a perfect rule of righteousness?*

Answer.—Yes. Jas. 1:25; 2:8, 10-12; Rom. 13:8, 9. Upon the fall of man, the law, as a covenant of works, was disannulled and set aside; but, considered as moral, it continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness. Ps. 119:96. That fair copy of the law which had been inscribed on the heart of the first man in his creation, was, by the fall, greatly defaced, although not totally obliterated, Rom. 1:19, 20. Its general principles remain still, in some degree, engraven on the minds of all men, Rom. 2:14, 15; Acts 14:17.

Although some would understand that Christ would not abolish the law until he had fulfilled it, Rom. 10:4; we must understand that he was the “end of the law” as perfecting and consummating it rather than destroying and abolishing it, Matt. 5:17, 18. Christ gives a stricter exposition of the law and vindicates it from the corrupt glosses of the Pharisees, which speaks of its continuance, Rom. 3:31. Furthermore, the apostle tells us that the law is “holy, just and good” and that he delighted in it after the inward man, Rom. 7:12, 22, 25. With this, James agrees asserting the law to be a perfect rule of righteousness, Jas. 2:8-11. Thus, the apostle John asserts the same, 1 John 2:4; 3:4.

This law binds men, not as Christians, but as men as appears: 1.) That which being observed, causes the consciences of men to excuse them, and which, not being observed, causes their consciences to accuse them, is binding on the conscience, Rom. 2:15. But it is the law of God does this very thing causing the consciences of the regenerate to excuse or else accuse them, Rom. 2:12. 2.) That which has the power to say to the conscience, this ought to be done, and that ought not to be done, is binding on the conscience, Rom. 2:13. But the law of God has this very power, Rom. 7:8. 3.) The authority by which men are urged to duty binds the conscience to obedience, Rom. 13:3, 4. But the law of God has that authority to bind, Rom. 13:8, 9. 4.) If the law does not bind men to obedience to God, then there remains no more possibility of sin, Rom. 4:15; yet, sin remains even after the Covenant of Works has been voided, 1 John 1:8.

Question 2.—*Was this law delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in the Ten Commandments, and written in two tables?*

Answer.—Yes. Deut. 5:32; 10:4; Ex. 34:1. Though this law was maintained during the patriarchal period, Gen. 9:5, 6; 18:19; 20:3, 9; 35:3; etc.; the original edition of this law being greatly obliterated, Rom. 1:21; God was graciously pleased to give a new and complete copy of it, Ex. 32:15, 16. He delivered it to the Israelites from Mount Sinai, with awful solemnity, Deut. 5:22. In this promulgation of the law he summed it up in ten

¹ Jas. 1:25; 2:8, 10-12; Rom. 13:8, 9; Deut. 5:32; Deut. 10:4; Ex. 34:1.

² Matt. 22:37-40.

commandments; and, therefore, it is commonly styled the law of the Ten Commandments, Deut. 4:13. Of the duties enjoined in the first four, God is the direct object: of those inculcated in the last, man is the direct object, Matt. 22:37-40. Thus we conform our division to our Saviour's summary, love to God and love to man, Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27.

This law was maintained through the prophets whose burden was always to call Israel back to the law of God, Isa. 1:10. This law was also identified with that law given to Moses upon Mount Sinai, Mal. 4:4.

Question 3.—*Do the first four commandments contain our duty to God, and the other six, our duty towards man?*

Answer.—Yes. Matt. 22:37-40. Thus do the Papists and Lutherans err maintaining that three only belong to the first table, and seven to the second: And that, Thou shalt not make unto the any graven image, with the foregoing, Thou shalt not have any gods before me, are but one command. And that, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, &c. are two distinct commands. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because the two first precepts command diverse things, the one teaches us, who is to be worshipped—the true and living God, and no other, Ex. 20:3; Rev. 19:10. The second instructs us, how he is to be worshipped, namely, according to his own appointment, and not according to the appointment, and pleasure of men, as by images and such like, Ex. 20:4-6; 1 Cor. 10:20. 2.) Because it is one and the same concupiscence, which is forbidden in the tenth command, the sum whereof, Thou shalt not covet, is cited by the apostle Paul, Rom. 7:7, and which is summarily expressed in the close of the tenth command, Nor any thing which is thy neighbour's. 3.) If the tenth commandment ought to be two, because these words are repeated, then it would follow, that there should be as many commands, as there are things desired or forbidden: Because it is evident, that these words, Thou shalt not covet, are to be repeated with every part, Ex. 20:17. 4.) In Exodus 20:17, Moses puts the coveting of the house before that of the wife; but reverses the order in Deuteronomy 5:21, which he ought not to have done if they were two distinct precepts.