

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 14.-Of Saving Faith.

II. By this Faith, a Christian beleeveth to be true, whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein¹; and, acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yeelding obedience to the Commands², trembling at the threatnings³, and imbracing the Promises of God for this life, and that which is to come⁴. But the principall Acts of saving faith, are, Accepting, Receiving, and Resting upon Christ alone for Justification, Sanctification, and Eternall life, by vertue of the Covenant of Grace⁵.

Question 1.—*Does a Christian, by faith believe whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God speaking therein?*

Answer.—Yes. John 4:42; 1 John 5:10; Acts 24:14; 1 Thess. 2:13. So then, the Papists err, who commend and extol implicit faith, and who define faith, rather by ignorance than by knowledge. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God; and therefore there can be no faith without knowledge, Rom. 10:17. 2.) Because all believers are taught of God, Isa. 54:13; John 6:45. 3.) Because Christ says, This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent, John 17:3. 4.) Because the prophet Isaiah says, By his knowledge, shall my righteous servant justify many, Isa. 53:11.

Question 2.—*Does the faith of a believer act differently upon that which each passage contains, yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings and embracing the promises of God for this life and the life to come?*

Answer.—Yes. Rom. 16:26; Isa. 66:2; Heb. 11:13; 1 Tim. 4:8. The object of faith is first of all the Word of God in general, that is, all that God has revealed in His Word in both Old and New Testaments. Acts 28:23. This is particularly true for all that God has revealed and promised in the gospel, which contains all the promises pertaining to reconciliation, forgiveness of sins, peace, holiness and salvation, Jas. 1:18-21. All of this in both Testaments is offered and promised to believers. “Believe the gospel,” Mark 1:15; “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God,” Rom. 10:17; “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” Gal. 3:2; *cf.* Rom. 1:16; John 3:16. Since the Word of God is truth, John 17:17, and since God is the God of truth, Isa. 65:16, God can do no other than present truth to man and command him to believe the truth, Luke 16:29-31. Therefore, whenever commands, promises, or threats are presented in the Word of God which do not harmonize with the final outcome, they must be understood as being of a contingent nature, 1 Pet. 1:23-25. They thus continue to be the truth and are believed as such, 1 Thess. 2:13.

¹ John 4:42; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 John 5:10; Act 24:14.

² Rom. 16:26.

³ Isa. 66:2.

⁴ Heb. 11:13; 1 Tim. 4:8.

⁵ John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Acts 15:11.

Question 3.—*Are the principle acts of saving faith, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone, for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace?*

Answer.—Yes. Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Acts 15:11. So then, Papists err, who maintain faith to be nothing but a naked assent to the truth revealed in the word; it being placed by them in the understanding only, *cf.* Gal. 5:6. Likewise, Socinians err, who put no difference between faith and the obedience of works. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because to believe is to receive Christ, which is an act of the will, John 1:12. 2.) Because faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, Heb. 11:1. Faith is a firm ground, or a firm confidence; that is, it is that which causes to stand firm the things promised by God in Christ, and which therefore are expected by hope, Heb. 3:14. Now this is not done by only assenting to God's promises in our understanding, but also trusting to the same in our will, Tit. 1:1. Faith is a firm ground of the things hoped for, and an argument of things not seen, Ps. 27:13. Faith is a conviction, for faith representing God's revelation and promise, convinces and assures the heart of man, more strongly of the truth of a thing, than any other argument brought from natural reason can do, Heb. 11:13. 3.) Because we are justified before God by faith, Rom. 5:1. But we are not justified by a bare and naked assent to the truth, otherwise the devils should be justified, James 2:19. Neither are we justified by the Socinian's faith, which is everywhere condemned in Scripture, Rom. 3:20, 28; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8, 9; Phil. 3:19; Tit. 3:4, 5.