

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 10.-Of Effectual Calling.

IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the Ministry of the Word¹, and may have some common operations of the Spirit², yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved³: much lesse can men, not professing the Christian Religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of Nature, and the Law of that Religion they doe professe⁴. And, to assert and maintain, that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested⁵.

Question 1.—*Can any not elected, although called by the ministry of the word, and having some common operations of the Spirit, truly come to Christ, and so be saved?*

Answer.—No. Matt. 22:14; 7:22; 13:20, 21; Heb. 6:4, 5; John 6:64-66; 8:24. Thus, the Arminians err, who maintain, that there is sufficient grace given to all men for their conversion, to whom the gospel is preached. For, 1.) Because Christ says to his disciples, to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given, Matt. 13:11. 2.) Because it is said of the Jews, they could not believe, because God had blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, John 12:39, 40. 3.) Because Christ said to his disciples, there are some of you that do not believe: Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father, John 6:64, 65. 4.) Because the prophet Isaiah complains, who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Isa. 53:1. 5.) Because many are called, but few are chosen, Matt. 22:14. 6.) Because men in nature do not discern neither can they know the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2:14. 7.) Because the most part of the world are buried in the gross darkness, and have their understanding darkened, and are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts, Eph. 4:18.

Question 2.—*Can men, not professing the Christian Religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of Nature, and the Law of that Religion they do profess?*

Answer.—No. Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Eph. 2:12; John 4:22; 17:3. That the diligent profession and honest practice of neither natural religion, nor of any other religion than pure Christianity, can in the least avail to promote the salvation of the soul, is evident from the essential principles of the gospel, Gal. 6:15. If any person perfectly conformed to the amount of spiritual truth known to him in every thought and act from birth upward, however little that knowledge might be, he would of course need no salvation, *cf.* Mark 10:18. But all men, as we have seen, are born under condemnation, and begin to act as moral agents with natures already corrupt. Rom. 3:23. Hence it follows that an atonement is

¹ Matt. 22:14.

² Matt. 7:22; 13:20, 21; Heb. 6:4, 5.

³ John 6:64-66; 8:24.

⁴ Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Eph. 2:12; John 4:22; 17:3.

⁵ 2 John 9-11; 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:6-8.

absolutely necessary, and consequently a personal interest in the redemption of Christ is absolutely necessary to salvation; for if a law, conformity to which could have given life, could have been given, Christ is dead in vain, Gal. 2:21; 3:21.

Question 3.—*Is it very pernicious, and to be detested, to assert and maintain, that they may?*

Answer.—Yes. 2 John 9-11; 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:6-8. To admit that men may be saved irrespectively of Christ is virtually to deny Christ. There is no salvation without Christ, Acts 4:12.

Question 4.—*How far may men come in the common operations of the Spirit and the principles of the true religion and faith without being effectually called?*

Answer.—From the words of the apostle, in Hebrews, we are led to understand that men might make great advances in outward grace and ministrations of the Spirit and yet fall, Heb. 10:22, 23, 26. In verses 22, 23, it is clear that the apostle is speaking of matters of faith (πίστεως), or belief, Heb. 3:14; 4:14. These matters are matters pertaining to the first table of the Law, Deut. 6:5. His concern is for sin against the first table of the Law, Luke 10:27. If this sin against the first table is committed “willfully” and “after we have received the knowledge (ἐπίγνωσιν; *i.e.*, a recognition, or consciousness) of the truth” (*i.e.*, against knowledge), it is beyond pardon (*i.e.*, “no more sacrifice for sins”), this sin is an accounting of the blood of the covenant unholy which, in turn, does “despite unto the Spirit of grace,” Heb. 10:29. The knowledge (or consciousness, or recognition) of the truth is called being “enlightened” and tasting of “the heavenly gift” and a “partaking (μετόχους; *i.e.*, sharing) of the Holy Ghost,” Heb. 6:4. This degree of enlightenment and participation is such that it is possible to “fall away” never to be brought again to repentance, Heb. 6:6. This is an enlightening and tasting of the “good word of God,” and a sharing, or partaking, of “the powers of the world to come,” Heb. 6:5. It is enough to leave the person without excuse, having knowledge, particularly with respect to those matters of faith contained in the first table of the Law, Rom. 1:20. The apostle is addressing professing Christians and speaking of those matters of faith, *cf.* Heb. 6: 1-3. Every ministration of the word of God is a ministration of the Spirit by whom we are saved, Phil. 2:16. The Gospel is the very ministration of the Holy Ghost, Gal. 3:5. What is in view is the rejection of the Gospel once one has had a competent measure of knowledge to be enlightened so as to be able to sin against knowledge willfully doing despite to the Spirit of grace, Isa. 63:10. Rejecting the Gospel, then, when one has come to the point of knowing that it is true, is the only unpardonable sin because it alone rises to the occasion of sinning against the Holy Ghost, who alone can enlighten and make men to taste the power of the world to come in and through that good word of God, Luke 12:10.