

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 11.-Of Justification.

IV. God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect¹, and Christ did, in the fullness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification²: nevertheless, they are not justified, until the holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them³.

Question 1.—*Did God, from all eternity decree to justify the elect?*

Answer.—Yes. Gal. 3:8; 1 Pet. 1:2, 19, 20. Prior to creation and the existence of the elect, God has eternally purposed to justify the elect in their lifetime on the basis of the merits of Christ which are received by faith, Rom. 8:29, 30. “Who hath saved us...according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” 2 Tim. 1:9; “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,” Eph. 1:5. This purpose is not the equivalent of justification, for a purpose differs from its execution, *cf.* Rev. 13:8 *with* Acts 2:23.

Question 2.—*Did Christ, in the fullness of time, die for their sins and rise again for their justification?*

Answer.—Yes. Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:6; Rom. 4:25. The Lord Jesus, because of the covenant of redemption, gave Himself as a Surety who took all upon Himself, Ps. 89:3; John 6:37; 10:29. As such, He took their personal guilt from them upon Himself in order to atone for this at the appointed time, Rom. 5:6; 1 Tim. 1:15. Since He made full satisfaction for this guilt, He has merited the right to eternal life for them, 2 Cor. 5:21. Having fully accomplished this, He was therefore “justified in the Spirit,” 1 Tim. 3:16, that is, God declared that satisfaction had been made by Him and that He no longer had to suffer and be obedient for the satisfaction of His justice on behalf of the elect, John 19:30; 1 Cor. 6:11. Thus, their sins have been atoned for by reason of a transaction between the Father and the Surety, and the right to eternal life was merited, Isa. 42:6. Christ having thus been justified, all His elect are justified in Him *virtualiter*, that is, *by its virtue* and efficacy, and are indeed reconciled, 2 Cor. 5:18-20. This, however, is not so *actualiter*, that is, actually, for they did not exist as yet, John 1:9. The first [justification *virtualiter*] is not the justification of which Scripture speaks, but rather the latter [justification *actualiter*]; this cannot occur unless man, having sinned, exists and believes in Christ, John 20:31.

Question 3.—*Are the elect justified, until the Holy Spirit, in due time, actually apply Christ to them?*

Answer.—No. Col. 1:21, 22; Tit. 3:4-7. Therefore, the Antinomians err, who maintain, that the elect are justified from eternity, or when the price of redemption was paid. Because 1.) All that are justified, have been strangers and enemies to God, and children of wrath, Eph. 2:3; Col. 1:21; Tit. 3:3; 1 Cor. 6:10, 11. 2.) Because none are justified, until they believe in Christ, Gal. 2:16. 3.) Paul expressly confirms this in the chain of salvation,

¹ Gal. 3:8; 1 Pet. 1:2, 19, 20.

² Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:6; Rom. 4:25.

³ Col. 1:21, 22; Gal. 2:16; Tit. 3:4-7.

enumerating in order the benefits flowing to the elect from the eternal love of God where he puts calling before justification, Rom. 8:30. 4.) Justification necessarily involves a deliverance from the obligation to punishment which sins deserved and no one can obtain it without faith and repentance, it is evident that such a justification could not have been made from eternity, but only in time—when the man actually believes and repents, John 6:29; Rom. 10:9. For, he who is not yet converted and lies in sin, remains in death, 1 John 3:14; and is of the Devil, 1 John 3:8; and in a state of condemnation, Gal. 5:21. 5.) Scripture speaks of the forgiveness of sins in the future tense, 1 John 1:9; God shall justify and God shall forgive, Gal. 2:16. “Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith,” Rom. 3:30; “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins,” Acts 10:43; “...then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin,” 2 Chron. 7:14. Justification did therefore not occur from eternity, Rom. 4:5.

Question 4.—*What is hyper-Calvinism?*

Answer.—The question of hyper-Calvinism has often been tied to the assertion of eternal justification. However, there are generally three things which comprise those views historically denominated hyper-Calvinism: 1.) A denial of the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ—not merely that Christ did not, in fact, die for all men but that there is an insufficiency in the grace wherein the atonement was made. 2.) A denial of the free offers of the Gospel to all men—not merely that its efficacy is limited to the elect but that it should not be preached to any but those who feel themselves burdened by sin. 3.) A denial of the duty of all men, upon hearing of the Gospel, to repent and believe, to exercise faith.

Against this, we assert: 1.) The sufficiency of the atonement is directly tied to the subject making atonement, in this case the eternal Son of God, John 3:16, 17. 2.) There is a Gospel invitation made to all who hear, upon which they might rest their hope, without recourse to trying to determine whether or not they are indeed elect, Rom. 3:22, 23. 3.) There is a divine commandment that all men, indiscriminately, upon hearing this Gospel ought to believe and obey, 1 John 3:23.