

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 9.-Of Free-will.

III. Man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of Will to any spirituall good accompanying salvation¹: so as, a naturall man, being altogether averse from that good², and dead in sin³, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto⁴.

Question 1.—*Did man by his fall into a state of sin, wholly lose all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation?*

Answer.—Yes. Rom. 5:6; 8:7. There is, in the unrenewed will, utter inability for what is truly good and acceptable in the sight of God, Ps. 81:11. We deny him not a power to choose, pursue, and act, what, as to the matter, is good: but though he can will what is good and right, he can will nothing aright and well, John 15:5. *Without me, i.e.,* separate from me, as a branch from the stock, *ye can do nothing; to wit,* nothing truly and spiritually good, Col. 1:21. Thus, everything fallen man thinks or does, apart from a proper concern for the glory of God, is, properly speaking, sin, Rom. 14:23. Therefore, even those actions most unobjectionable in themselves are made sinful as they are the works emanating from a fallen and dead nature, Prov. 21:4. So, too, all religious services proceeding from the will of fallen man stand condemned before God, Prov. 15:8. For man, in an estate of sin, even his very choice and desire of spiritual things is carnal and selfish, John 6:26.

Question 2.—*Is the natural man altogether averse from that good accompanying salvation?*

Answer.—Yes. Rom. 3:10, 12. There is in the unrenewed will an averseness to good, Rom. 1:28. The natural man, being characterized by his disordered desires, seeks to uproot all knowledge of God from the heart, Ps. 53:1-3. The fallen nature is become a source of all kinds of uncleanness, Job 14:4. Sin is the natural man's element; he is as unwilling to part with it, as fish are to come out of the water into dry land, John 8:45. He not only cannot come to Christ, but he *will not come*, John 5:40. He is polluted, and hates to be washed, Jer. 13:27. He is sick, yet utterly averse to the remedy: he loves his disease so, that he loathes the Physician, John 7:7. Consider how the will of the natural man rebels against the light, Job 24:13. Light sometimes enters in, because he is not able to keep it out: but he loves darkness rather than light, John 3:19.

Question 3.—*Is the natural man dead in sin?*

Answer.—Yes. Col. 2:13. Men, lying in the corruption of their nature, are spiritually dead, the nature of unrenewed man is spiritually dead, and so incapable of producing any effect that reflects spiritual life, Ezek. 37:1-10. The natural man, possessing only a nature spiritually dead, is only able to wield a will that is dead in sin, 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. It is characterized by its desire to live in pleasure rather than serving God, 1 Tim. 5:6. It may

¹ Rom. 5:6; 8:7; John 15:5.

² Rom. 3:10, 12.

³ Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13.

⁴ John 6:44, 65; Eph. 2:2-5; 1 Cor. 2:14; Tit. 3:3-5.

have the name and appearance of that which lives but the stark reality is quite different, Rev. 3:1. The natural man's will is in Satan's fetters, hemmed in within the circle of evil, and cannot move beyond it, any more than a dead man can raise himself out of his grave, Eph. 2:1, 5. This is why these works, enacted by a will expressive of dead nature are called dead works, Heb. 9:14.

Question 4.—*Is man able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto?*

Answer.—No. John 6:44, 65. Man's inability is demonstrated from the following: 1.) Because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:7, 9. 2.) Because all that the natural doth, is sin, and cannot in any way please God, because his works are not of faith, nor to the glory of God, as the law requires, Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:6; Tit. 1:15; Ps. 14:3; Rom. 8:8. 3.) Because a man has no good in himself, whereby he may be differenced from the most wicked, nor any good thing which he has not received, 1 Cor. 4:7. 4.) Because conversion, grace and salvation, are not of him that runneth or willeth, but of God that sheweth mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth, Rom. 9:15, 16, 18; 11:7, 8; Matt. 11:21, 22, 25. 5.) Because the conversion of a natural man, is the quickening of one dead, Eph. 2:2-5; Col. 2:13. It is a regeneration, or bearing again, John 3:5, 6. It is the creating of a new heart, Ps. 51:10. It is the taking away the heart of stone, and the giving of a heart of flesh, Ezek. 11:19; 36:25. And therefore as God raised Christ from the dead, so also he raised us from the grave of sin, by his own proper power, 1 Cor. 6:14. 6.) Because God converts and calls men, not by works of righteousness, which they have done, Tit. 3:3-7, but according to his own purpose and grace which is given us in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 1:9.