

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 15.-Of Repentance unto Life.

I. Repentance unto life, is an evangelicall grace¹, the Doctrine whereof is to be preached by every Minister of the Gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ².

Question 1.—*Is repentance unto life an evangelical grace?*

Answer.—Yes. Zech. 12:10. It is an evangelical grace because: 1.) Without it there is no salvation, Luke 13:3. 2.) Until sinners turn unto the Lord they are on the way to eternal death, Eph. 4:18; Ps. 82:5. 3.) Without repentance men are misled by the false glare of earthly things, Isa. 5:20; Jas. 3:15. 4.) The predominating principle—the love of the world—draws them away from God, 1 John 2:15. 5.) The will obstinately persists in departing from God, Jer. 8:5. 6.) To all repenting there is the promise of acceptance, Isa. 55:7; Luke 15:7. 7.) It is a gift bestowed by God, Acts 11:18.

Question 2.—*Is repentance unto life an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the Gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ?*

Answer.—Yes. Luke 24:47. Thus, the Antinomians err, who maintain that repentance is not an evangelical grace, and that it ought not to be preached by any minister of the gospel, saying it leads away from Christ, and is in many ways hurtful and dangerous to us, cf. Matt. 4:17. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because God has promised in the Covenant of Grace, that he will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication, which shall cause Christians under the Gospel to repent and mourn for their sins, Zech. 12:10. 2.) Because repentance is numbered among the saving graces, which shall be bestowed and conferred upon converts under the Gospel, and is sometimes put for the whole conversion of a man to God, Acts 11:15-18. 3.) Because the ministers of the Gospel ought to instruct those with meekness, who oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth, 2 Tim. 2:25. 4.) Because repentance from dead works, is among the principles of the doctrine of Christ; and it is a foundation which must be laid by ministers of the Gospel before the hearers of the Gospel can go on to perfection, Heb. 6:1. 5.) Because Christ himself appointed repentance, no less than remission of sins, to be proclaimed through the world, Luke 24:47. 6.) Because Christ and his apostles preached repentance, no less than faith, Mark 1:15; Matt. 3:2. The whole sum of the Gospel is placed in preaching faith, and repentance, Acts 20:20,21.

It is the duty of ministers of the Gospel to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God, Acts 20:27. As noted, faith and repentance are closely connected throughout Scripture because the faith that is unto salvation is a penitent faith and repentance that is unto life is a believing repentance, Ezek. 18:30-32. This is not to make faith dependent upon repentance but it is to affirm that faith without works, amongst which one of the first is repentance unto life, is dead, or no genuine faith at all, Jas. 2:21-23. It is the presence of repentance that makes visible the coming of the kingdom by faith, Matt. 21:31, 32. It is

¹Zech. 12:10; Acts 11:18.

²Luke 24:47; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21.

intimately tied to the remission of sins and reception of the Holy Ghost, Acts 2:38. Thus, preaching repentance characterized the very first preaching of the Gospel by the apostles commissioned by Christ himself, Mark 6:12.

Question 3.—*Is repentance a necessary duty, required in Scripture?*

Answer.—Yes. Luke 13:3, 5. God requires of us repentance unto life, that we may escape his wrath and curse, because the promise of forgiveness of sin is made to repentance, as a concomitant of faith; and it is not for God's honor to pardon and save any that go on still in their trespasses, Acts 3:19; 20:21. This appears: 1.) Paul as a minister of the Gospel to the Gentiles preached to them the necessity of repentance and its attendant works for the life of faith required under the New Testament administration, Acts 26:20. 2.) Scripture informs us that repentance which flows from saving faith leads to salvation, 2 Cor. 7:9,10. 3.) The lack of repentance is given as a great hindrance of obtaining salvation, Heb. 12:17. 4.) Those whom God elected from eternity, He will, in due time, bring to repentance, 2 Pet. 3:9.

It is notable that repentance is that particular thing singled out as causing rejoicing in heaven in believers, Luke 15:7, 10; because in repentance, there is a turning of the straying sinner back to God, Matt. 18:13.

Question 4.—*Is it necessary as a condition of the Covenant of Grace, or of the enjoyment of heaven?*

Answer.—No. Although it is necessary in order to final happiness, Heb. 12:14, 1 John 3:2; it is not a condition on which that happiness is suspended, Jer. 31:31-33. We must distinguish between election, which is unconditional, Rom. 9:11; justification, which is without works of the law, Rom. 3:28; and the display of this salvation, which is the working out of the two former things, Phil. 2:12. Repentance is not the ground of salvation, it is a promised and purchased blessing of the covenant, and fruit of salvation, Ezek. 36:26,31; Acts. 5:31.