

The Gospel is Conditional

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Chapter 38

The Gospel is Conditional

Antinomians deny all conditions of the Covenant of Grace, of justification, of salvation or that the Gospel has any conditions at all.¹ Yea, though you should not believe, yet God is faithful and cannot deny himself to be your Redeemer.² So (says Saltmarsh)³ it's not the way of a covenant that the Gospel uses, but rather the promise of grace and salvation.⁴ It is true, if we take a condition:

1. For an antecedent qualification going before redemption. The Gospel is no covenant of grace so as that God will neither redeem us in Christ, nor propose a covenant of grace, nor transact covenant-wise to be our God, while we believe [antecedently]. So faith is no condition. Antinomians ignorant of the doctrine of Protestants, fancied that of us.

Nor does it follow, as Crisp and antinomians say: faith, obedience and repentance are not conditions, because pardon, justification and salvation go before them, or because by them we do not purchase Christ. It only follows that they are not such conditions as are antecedent and purchase Christ; which we grant.

2. If a condition be taken in Law-terms for a condition, qualification or something that issues from free-will (without the determining grace of Christ), and such a condition as that salvation and imputed righteousness depend on it in a proper way [sense] of condition. So faith is neither strictly a condition of justification, nor

¹ Tobias Crisp, Sermon 6, vol. 1, pp. 160-162

² *Power of Love*, p. [?]

³ John Saltmarsh, *Free Grace*, pp. 206-207

⁴ John Saltmarsh, *Free Grace*, pp. 152-153

of righteousness, nor salvation, because God of mere grace works both the condition, faith and the thing conditioned.

[Margin Note: What a condition is.]

For a condition is properly a qualification or work to be done by a party by way of contract, league or bargain, and done of the party's own strength, as the one side, half, or quarter of a covenant, that obliges the other party to bestow a favor or reward for the performed condition, as Arminians say.

And neither in this sense do we ascribe a condition to men, because Christ as surety undertakes by promise to fulfill both our part and his own: 'I will write my Law in their hearts.' (Jer. 31:33,34; 32:39-40; Isa. 55:11; Heb. 8:10; Eze. 36:26) Christ subscribes the covenant for me and Himself, and leads our trembling hand at the pen and causes us to consent. In this notion the Gospel is all promise rather than a covenant or a bargain. And there is neither limb, nor lith [limb], nor joint of the covenant; but it's all pure grace: both work and wages. Antinomians cannot say that we teach that we are redeemed, justified, or saved for faith or for works.

But if a condition be taken evangelically for a qualification wrought in us, by the grace of Christ and without which we are not justified nor saved, then to deny the Gospel to be a conditional covenant is to bely [make a lie of] the Gospel. For the whole Gospel says: 'He that believes has life,' (is freely justified); 'He that believes not, is damned, and the wrath of God abides on him.' (Jn. 5:25; 3:18,36) And that repentance (Lk. 3:11; Acts 2:39; Jn. 5:40,44,47), doing of God's will and new obedience are conditions, is evident by Scripture.⁵ Nor is it a Popish way by works to say that we seek glory, honor and immortality (Rom. 2:7) by well doing. Works are not so much conditions of justification

⁵ Mt. 7:21; Eph. 4:24, 'Put on the new man.' Rom. 8:13, 'If you live after the flesh, you shall die.' Heb. 12:14, 'Without holiness none shall see God.' Matt 11:20-21; 10:30.

as faith is,⁶ yet are they conditions required in these that shall be saved. And because Christ works faith in us, it proves that it is not a condition of our own working, but not that it is no evangelic condition.

⁶ Rom. 3:26-31; see John 8:24; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Matt 18:3; Eph. 5:5; Acts 16:31; Heb. 11:2; Matt 16:24; 13:50; 1 John 3:3.