

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER I.-Of the Holy Scripture.

I. Although the Light of Nature, and the works of Creation and Providence, do so farre manifest the Goodnesse, Wisdome, and Power of God, as to leave men unexcusable¹; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his Will, which is necessary unto salvation². Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveale himself, and to declare that his Will unto his Church³; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the Truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the World, to commit the same wholly unto writing⁴: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary⁵; those former wayes of Gods revealing his Will unto his people, being now ceased⁶.

Question 1—*What is the Light of Nature?*

Answer—The Light of Nature is that image of God created in man (*cf.* Prov. 20:27) whereby all mankind possess the capacity to construct a natural theology, partly from what is innate (*i.e.*, conscience) and partly from what is acquired (*i.e.*, deduced), Acts 14:15-17; 17:23. Furthermore, “The Gentiles, which have not the law” (*i.e.*, the Ten commandments—Moses—summarizing the moral law) “do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another,” Rom. 2:14, 15. Note, the work of the law is said to be written (*γραπτόν—grapton*), or inscribed, like the law of Moses, in their hearts. The contrast is between a natural, external revelation to the conscience (and reason) and the supernatural, external revelation to the Jews on tablets of stone. Conscience is not the law of nature. Conscience is innate; a faculty or power of the soul of man, by which, as a judge, he passes sentence, in God’s name, upon his own conduct. It is the deputy or vicegerent of God in the soul, which pronounces in his name, a sentence of approbation, or disapprobation, on human conduct, according as it appears to be morally right or wrong. Respect must be had, in every case, to a law. There is no possibility of knowing what is right or wrong—approvable or disapprovable, without a law. *Sin is a transgression of the law*, 1 John 3:4; Rom. 7:7. Thus conscience is the capacity for reasoning to a judgment—“accusing or else excusing.” Hence men are said to “hold the truth in unrighteousness.” Rom. 1:18. That is, their consciences avoid judging in accordance with the work of God’s law inscribed in their hearts. “That which may

¹ Rom. 2:14, 15; Rom. 1:19, 20; Ps. 19:1-3; Rom. 1:32 w/ Rom. 2:1.

² 1 Cor. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:13, 14.

³ Heb. 1:1.

⁴ Prov. 22:19-21; Luke 1:3, 4; Rom. 15:4; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Isa. 8:19, 20.

⁵ 2 Tim. 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:19.

⁶ Heb. 1:1, 2.

be known of God is manifest in them (*ἐν αὐτοῖς—en autois*), for God hath shewed it unto them,” verse 19.

Question 2—*Is the Light of Nature, and the works of Creation and Providence, sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his Will, which is necessary unto salvation?*

Answer—No. 1 Cor. 1:21; 2:13, 14. Thus do the Socinians and others err maintaining that the revelation found in Holy Scripture is not necessary to salvation. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) None can be saved, except they be born again, by the incorruptible seed of the Word, 1 Pet. 1:23. 2.) Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no man cometh to the Father, but by the Son, John 14:6. 3.) There is no other Name under Heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved, but by the Name of Jesus, Acts 4:12. 4.) Men cannot believe in Christ without supernatural revelation: and therefore cannot be sanctified or justified. All justification, sanctification and remission of sins, are by God’s grace, and faith in Jesus, Rom. 3:24, 25; Acts 26:18. Neither can men be saved living according to the Light of Nature, because salvation is promised only to believers in Christ, Acts 16:31; John 3:16. 5.) All that know not God will be punished eternally, 2 Thess. 1:8. But men without supernatural Revelation cannot savingly know God, 1 Cor. 1:21; Matt. 11:27. 6.) Men destitute of supernatural Revelation cannot know their own corruption and misery, by the first Adam, nor the remedy which is offered by Christ, the second Adam. They are without God, without hope, without promises, without the Church, and covenant of God, and the mysteries of Faith are hid, and unknown to them only that perish and are lost, Eph. 2:11, 12; Rom. 9:4; 2 Cor. 4:3; Matt. 13:11, 12; 11:25-27.

Question 3—*Why is the Light of Nature, and the works of Creation and Providence, insufficient to give that knowledge of God necessary for salvation?*

Answer—Because, 1.) All unregenerate men have seared their natural light as with an hot iron, 1 Tim. 4:2. Thus, those regenerate are said to have their “hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,” Heb. 10:22. 2.) The works of creation, by the Fall, have been plunged into corruption, cursed for man’s sake, Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:19-22. 3.) Finally, the works of Providence can be no guide, for it often falls out that in God’s Providence men do wickedness; yet, from this, we ought not to conclude that God approves, Deut. 29:29; 30:11-14.

Question 4—*Are the holy Scriptures most necessary to the Church?*

Answer—Yes. 2 Tim. 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:19. Because: 1.) The Scriptures are the foundation, upon which the Church is built, Eph. 2:20. 2.) All things are to be examined by the Rule of the Word; as the noble Bereans did, Acts 17:11, 12. 3.) Unwritten traditions, such as claimed by Rome, are subject and liable to many corruptions, and are soon and quickly forgotten, Matt. 15:6; Col. 2:8. 4.) We have Life eternal in the Scriptures; therefore they are most necessary to the Church, John 5:39. 5.) The end for which the Scriptures are given is, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished to all good works, 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. And the Scriptures are written, that men may believe, John 20:31.

Question 5—*Are these former ways of God’s revealing his Will unto his people now ceased?*

Answer—Yes. Thus do the Fanatics and Enthusiasts err maintaining that God does reveal his Will yet by these means. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because God who at sundry times, and in diverse manners spake in times past unto the Fathers, by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, Heb. 1:1, 2. 2.) The Apostle calls the time of the New Testament, the last days, because under the same, there is no more alteration of the Covenant of Grace to be expected. All things are to abide without adding to, or taking away, as was taught by Christ, until the last day; *cf.* Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17. 3.) The ways and manners of old, was first by inspiration, 2 Chron. 15:1; Isa. 59:21; 2 Pet. 1:21. Secondly, by dreams, Job 33:14, 15; Gen. 40:8. Thirdly, by visions, Num. 12:6, 8. Fourthly, by Urim and Thummim, Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 30:7, 8. Fifthly, by signs, Gen. 32:25, 32; Ex. 13:21. Sixthly, by an audible voice, Ex. 20:1, Gen. 22:15. All which do end in Writing (*cf.* Ex. 17:14) which is a most sure and infallible way of the Lord revealing his Will to his people, Luke 1:3, 4.