

# THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

## CHAPTER 1.-*Of the Holy Scripture.*

IV. The Authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the Testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is Truth itself) the Author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.<sup>1</sup>

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Question 1—*Doth the Authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, depend upon the testimony of any man, or Church?*

*Answer*—No. 2 Pet. 1:19, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Thess. 2:13. Thus do the Papists err maintaining that the authority of the Scripture depends upon the testimony of the pope or the Church. Because, 1.) the Word is to be received by us, not as the word of man, but as the Word of God, 1 Thess. 2:13. 2.) Because, the Doctrine of Christ, to be received by Believers, dependeth not upon man's testimony, John 5:34. 3.) Because, God only is true, and infallible, and all men are liars, Rom. 3:4; Heb. 6:18. He is of incomprehensible wisdom, Ps. 147:5. Of great goodness, Ex. 18:9; Rom. 11:12; Ps. 34:8. Of absolute power and dominion, Gen. 17:1; Ps. 50:1, 2. Of infallible truth, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived, Rom. 3:4; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18. Therefore ought He to be credited, in all his Narrations, Promises, Threatenings, and Prophecies, and obeyed in all his Commandments only; because he himself hath said so.

Question 2—*From what source does the divine authority of the Scriptures become known to us?*

*Answer*—The question is not whether the Bible is authentic and divine; but, rather the question is, By what argument can its inspiration be proved to us? We maintain that primarily and principally the Bible is believed by us to be divine on account of itself (or the marks impressed upon it), not on account of the church. As threefold cause can be granted for the manifestation of anything (an objective, efficient and instrumental or organic), so a threefold question can arise about the divinity of the Bible: the first, concerning the argument on account of which I believe; the second, concerning the principle or efficient cause from which I am led to believe; the third, concerning the means and instrument through which I believe. Hence if the question is why, or on account of what, do I believe the Bible to be divine, I will answer that I do so on account of the Scripture itself which proves itself to be such, 1 Pet. 1:23. If it is asked me whence or from what I believe, I will answer from the Holy Spirit who produces that belief in me, Eph. 1:17, 18. Finally, if I am asked by what means or instrument I believe it, I will answer through the church which God uses in delivering the Scriptures to me, John 4:39; 1 Pet. 3:1, 2; John 5:33, 34. The question does not concern the motive or the introductory and ministerial means, whose assistance the Holy Spirit uses in persuading us of the authority of the Scriptures. This we concede to the church. Rather the question concerns the principal argument and motive by which we are brought to faith (not human, but divine) which is not to be found out of Scripture itself. Nor is the question whether divine

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. 1:19, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 John 5:9; 1 Thess. 2:13.

revelation is the formal reason of our faith; this we believe. Rather, What is that first and clearest revelation with respect to us which ought to be received through and on account of itself, and not on account of some other better known to us and therefore most common and the first principle of faith by which all things are to be proved? The question amounts to this—why, or on what account, do we believe that the Bible is the word of God; or what argument does the Holy Spirit principally use to convince us of the inspiration of the Scriptures? That the authority cannot rest upon the church is proved, 1.) because, the church is built upon the Scripture, Eph. 2:20. That is, it derives its authority from the Scriptures. 2.) The authority of the church would be prior to the Scriptures and so would be the first thing to be believed. 3.) A fallible and human testimony (as that of the church) cannot form the foundation of divine faith.

Question 3—*How then does Scripture make itself known?*

*Answer*—1.) By the nature of Scripture itself. For a law does not derive its authority from the subordinate judges who interpret it or from the heralds who promulgate it, but from its author alone. Thus, the holy Scripture which is the law of the supreme lawgiver, the will of our heavenly Father and the inflexible rule of faith, cannot have authority except from itself. 2.) The Scripture, which is the first principle of the supernatural order, is known by itself and has no need of arguments derived from without to prove and make itself known to us. If God has stamped such marks upon all first principles that they can be known at once by all men, we cannot doubt that he has placed them upon this sacred first principle. 1 John 5:9. 3.) By comparison, as objects of sense presented to faculties well disposed are immediately distinguished and known without external argument. Light is immediately known by its own brightness; food by its peculiar taste; an odor by its peculiar fragrance. Thus, the Scripture, which is set forth to us in respect to the new man and spiritual senses, now under the symbol of a clear light, Ps. 119:105; then of the most sweetest food, Ps. 19:10; Isa. 55:1, 2; Heb. 5:14; and again of the sweetest smelling savor, Song 1:3; therefore, it may easily be distinguished of itself by the senses of the new man as soon as it is presented to them and makes itself known by its own light, sweetness and fragrance. There is no need to seek elsewhere for proof that this is light, food or a sweet smelling savor.