

## CONFESSION OF FAITH.

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

X. The Supreme Judge by which all Controversies of Religion are to be determined, and all Decrees of Councils, Opinions of Ancient Writers, Doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined; and, in whose Sentence we are to rest; can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

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Question 1—*Is the Holy Spirit, speaking in the Scripture, the supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion, are determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest?*

*Answer*—Yes. Matt. 22:29, 31; Eph. 2:20; Acts 28:25. The testimony of the Spirit is superior to reason, Rom. 8:16. For as God alone can properly bear witness to his own words, so these words will not obtain full credit in the hearts of men, until they are sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 1:22. The same Spirit, therefore, who spoke by the mouth of the prophets, must penetrate our hearts, in order to convince us that they faithfully delivered the message with which they were divinely entrusted, Eph. 1:13. This connection is most aptly expressed by Isaiah, Isa. 59:21.

Question 2—*Do not they err, who place the Church of Rome, and the Pope; or, who plead the light within, or some other experience, as the only judge of all controversies of faith?*

*Answer*—Yes. Because, 1.) God commands all men, to go to the law, and to the testimony, in doubtful matters, Isa. 8:20. 2.) All doubts in religion, are to be examined by the rule of the Word, Acts 17:11; Gal. 6:16. 3.) Christ and his apostles, did always dispute, and reason from the Scriptures, against the enemies of the truth, Matt. 22:31; Gal. 3:13. 4.) The Church of God is founded upon the writings of the prophets and, apostles, Eph. 2:20. 5.) We are commanded to prove all things, and to try the spirits, 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 4:1, 6.

Question 3—*Has God told us that the Scriptures are the infallible judge of religious controversies?*

*Answer*—Yes. 1.) God in the Old and New Testaments absolutely and unconditionally send us to this Judge—Deut. 17:10; Luke 16:29. Note, Christ does not say that they have the priests and scribes (who cannot err), but they have Moses and the prophets (by their writings), implying that they are abundantly sufficient for full instruction and that their authority is to be received and acquiesced in, Isa. 34:16. 2.) The practice of Christ and his apostles, as intimated, confirms this for in controversies of faith they appeal to the Scriptures, Matt. 4:4, 6, 7; John 5:39; 10:34, 35; Acts 17:2, 11; 18:28; 26:22. Peter compares the word to a heavenly vision, as a more sure word, whereunto we do well to take heed, 2 Pet. 1:19. On the contrary, the Pharisees and Sadducees are condemned because they departed from them, Matt. 15:3. 3.) A supreme and infallible judge is one who never errs in judgment, nor is he able to err; is uninfluenced by prejudice and from whom there is no appeal, Mal. 4:4; Gen. 18:25. Now these traits can be found in neither

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 22:29, 31; Eph. 2:20; Acts 28:25.

the church, nor councils, nor pope, nor in personal experience, for these all can err and often have erred very seriously, and they are the guilty party, John 9:22. But, God speaking in the Scriptures claims these as his own prerogatives alone, as incapable of error in judgment, being truth itself, uninfluenced by partiality, nor can there be any higher appeal than to God (speaking in the Scriptures) for He has no superior, Isa. 40:8. 4.) Man cannot be the infallible interpreter of the Scriptures and Judge of controversies because he is liable to error, Josh. 1:5. Our faith can be placed in God alone, Heb. 11:6. As the only teacher, he can best explain the meaning of the law, Matt. 23:8, 10; our lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy, Jas. 4:12. If the rulers of the church are influenced by the Holy Spirit, they do not cease to be men and therefore they are fallible, Gal. 2:11. For their inspiration is only ordinary and common, and not extraordinary and special (conferring the gift of infallibility which the apostles and prophets had), Matt. 10:20 w/ Acts 15:6. 5.) If there is some external source of interpretation, the Scriptures do not mention it (*i.e.*, no pope, no councils, *etc.*). 6.) The church cannot be regarded as the judge of controversies because she would be a judge in her own cause and the rule of herself, 1 Cor. 4:3, 4.