

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 1.-*Of the Holy Scripture.*

VII. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all¹: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the Learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them².

Question 1.—*Are all these things, which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, so clearly propounded, and opened, in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the Learned, but the Unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them, for their salvation?*

Answer.—Yes. Psal. 119:105, 130. Therefore those do truly err, who maintain that unwritten traditions or the infallible expounding of the Church are necessary to make the Scriptures to be understood. Because, 1.) the Word is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths, Psal. 119:105. 2.) The Scripture is a light, which shineth in a dark place, 2 Pet. 1:19. 3.) The Scripture enlighteneth the eyes, and maketh the simple wise, Psal. 19:7, 8.

Question 2.—*Does this question concern the perspicuity of the subject or of persons?*

Answer.—No. We do not deny that the Scriptures are obscure to unbelievers and the unrenewed, to whom Paul says his gospel is hid, 2 Cor. 4:3. Also, we hold that the Spirit of illumination is necessary to make them intelligible to believers, John 6:45. Rather the question concerns the obscurity or perspicuity of the object or of the Scriptures (*i.e.*, whether they are so obscure that the believer cannot apprehend them for salvation without the authority and judgment of the church—which we deny), Matt. 12:3, 5; 21:42.

Question 3.—*Does this question concern the obscurity of the things or mysteries recorded in the Scriptures?*

Answer.—This question does not concern such mysteries; we acknowledge such to be in Scripture, Gen. 50:20. Rather the question concerns only those things necessary for salvation, and indeed as to them, only so far as they are necessary to be known and cannot be unknown without criminality, 2 Tim. 3:15. For instance, the mystery of the Trinity is plainly delivered as to the fact which is necessary, but not as to the how, which we are not permitted to know (nor is that essential to salvation), Matt. 28:19.

Question 4.—*Is this question whether things essential to salvation are everywhere in the Scriptures perspicuously revealed?*

Answer.—We acknowledge that there are some things hard to be understood, 2 Pet. 3:16, and intended by God to exercise our attention and mental powers, 1 Tim. 4:13. Nor does this question exclude the means necessary for interpretation (*i.e.*, the internal light of the Spirit, attention of mind, the voice and ministry of the church, sermons and

¹ 2 Pet. 3:16.

² Psal. 119:105, 130.

commentaries, prayer and watchfulness), Acts 8:30, 31. For we hold these means not only to be useful, but also necessary ordinarily, 1 Tim. 3:2.

Question 5.—*How then is the perspicuity of the Scriptures further proved?*

Answer.—1.) The law of God, by which is intended the whole of the Word of God, is light, Prov. 6:23. The Scriptures are said to be luminous not only because they illuminate the intellect, but because they are in themselves luminous and naturally adapted to illuminate those who look upon them with the eyes of faith, Psal. 18:28. 2.) Thus, Deut. 30:11, 14, refers not only to the easiness of fulfilling, but also of understanding its mandates without which they could not be fulfilled. Nor must this be understood only of the law of Moses, but of the Word of God in general, Rom. 16:25, 26. Hence Paul applies it to the word of faith, Rom. 10:8, which cannot be fulfilled by works, but must be believed by faith. 3.) Furthermore, to deny the perspicuity of the Scriptures is to impugn the goodness and wisdom of God by insinuating that He either was unwilling or unable to speak plainly to men, 1 John 5:10.