

## CONFESSION OF FAITH.

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

VIII. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the Native Language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek, (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the Nations) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and Providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore Authentically;<sup>1</sup> so as, in all Controversies of Religion, the Church is finally to Appeale unto them.<sup>2</sup> But, because these Originall Tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them,<sup>3</sup> therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar Language of every Nation unto which they come,<sup>4</sup> that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner,<sup>5</sup> and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.<sup>6</sup>

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Question 1.—*Hath the Lord by his singular providence and care, kept pure in all Ages the Old Testament in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Matt. 5:18. Thus those do err which maintain, the Old Testament in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek, which are the Fountains, to be corrupted. Because: 1.) Christ says, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled, Matt. 5:18. 2.) There can be no urgent necessity shown, why the Fountains are corrupted. 3.) If any such corruption had been in Scripture, Christ, his Apostles, and the Orthodox Fathers would have declared as much, *cf.* Acts 15:15. In fact, Jesus never accuses the Jews, who were the keepers of the sacred text, Rom. 3:1, 2; of dereliction of duty on this count, though he declares against them on many other accounts. 4.) They never have nor can make out any manifest corruptions in the Fountains.

Question 2.—*Is the question, Whether or not the Fountains are so pure that no fault has crept into the many sacred manuscripts, either through waste of time, the carelessness of the copyists or the malice of the Jews or of heretics?*

*Answer.*—No. All sides acknowledge this. Beza and Stephanus have carefully observed in the Greek (as well, the Jews in the Hebrew) various readings which prove this. Rather the question is, Whether the original texts have been so corrupted either by copyists through carelessness (or by the Jews and heretics through malice) that they can no longer be regarded as the judge of controversies and the rule to which all versions must be applied. This we deny, for Christ himself made use of these very Scriptures for such controversies, Matt. 22:29; Gal. 3:16.

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5:18.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. 8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39, 46.

<sup>3</sup> John 5:39.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 14:6,9,11,12,24,27,28

<sup>5</sup> Col. 3:16

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 15:4.

Question 3.—*How can we know the sources have not been corrupted?*

*Answer.*—Because: 1.) The providence of God, Eph. 1:11, which could not permit books which it willed to be written by inspiration 2 Tim. 3:16; (θεόπνευστος) for the salvation of men (even to the end of the world) to become so corrupted as to render them unfit for this purpose. And since new revelations are not to be expected, what can be more derogatory to God than to assert that he has permitted the books containing this doctrine to become so corrupt that they cannot serve for a canon of faith? 2.) The fidelity of the Christian Church and unceasing labor in preserving the manuscripts; for since they have always labored with great zeal to keep this sacred deposit uncorrupted, it is not credible that they would either corrupt it themselves or suffer it to be corrupted by others, *cf.* Col. 4:16. 3.) The religion of the Jews who have bestowed upon the sacred manuscripts great care and labor amounting even to superstition. 4.) The carefulness of the Masoretes not only about verses and words, but also about single letters—they counted every letter to be sure that not one was missing. 5.) The multitude of copies, scattered far and wide. How could all have been corrupted in the same way? 6.) If the sources were corrupted, Christ would not have passed over such in silence, nor could he use corrupted books, Matt. 21:42. There is no evidence that such corruption occurred after Christ, for early scholars, such as Origen and Jerome, absolve the Jews from such a crime. 7.) If the Jews were going to corrupt the text, we would expect them to corrupt it at those points which vindicate Christianity—the prophecies predictive of Christ. But, this is not the case.

Question 4.—*Are the Hebrew version of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New the only authentic versions?*

*Answer.*—Yes. The reasons are: 1.) Because the sources alone are inspired of God both as to the things and words, 2 Tim. 3:16, hence, they alone can be authentic. For whatever the men of God wrote, they wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit, 2 Pet. 1:21, who, to keep them from error, dictated not only the matter but also the words, which cannot be said of any version. 2.) They are the standard and rule to which all the versions should be compared, just as the copy should answer to the pattern and the stream be distinguished from its source. 3.) These editions were authentic from the very first and were always considered to be so by the Jewish and Christian church many centuries after Christ. Nor can any reason be given why they should now cease to be authentic. 4.) If the Hebrew edition of the Old and the Greek edition of the New Testament are not authentic, there would be no authentic version, since none besides this has a divine testimony of its own authenticity.

Question 5.—*Are the Original tongues, the Greek and Hebrew, to be translated into the Vulgar Language of every nation into which they come?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Thus do the Papists err who maintain that the Scriptures need not, indeed ought not, be so translated to keep the people from falling into errors and heresies. They are confuted because we are commanded in the fear of God to read and search the Scriptures, John 5:39; 1 Cor. 14:6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 24, 27, 28. And, 1.) because the Scriptures were given to the Jews, in their own vulgar language, that they might be read publicly and privately by all, Deut. 31:10-12; 11:18-20. 2.) The New Testament was written in Greek, which at the time was most generally known to the nations. 3.) Christ bids all without distinction, search the Scriptures, John 5:39. 4.) The prophets and apostles preached their doctrines, to the people and nations, in their known languages,

Jer. 36:15, 16; Acts 2:6. 5.) Immediately after the apostles times, there were many translations extant (*i.e.*, Syriac, Persian, *etc.*). 6.) All things must be done in the congregation unto edifying, 1 Cor. 14:26, but an unknown tongue does not edify. 7.) All are commanded to try the spirits, 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 Cor. 10:15. 8.) The Scriptures teach the way of Life, Prov. 2:9; Luke 16:29; Acts 24:14. 9.) The Scripture sets forth the duties of every man in his place, and estate of his life, Deut. 17:18-20; Josh. 1:8; Psal. 119:24; 2 Chron. 23:11. 10.) They are the ground of faith, Rom. 4:20; 2 Chron. 20:20. 11.) They are the epistle of God sent to his Church, Hos. 8:12; Rev. 2:1, 8, 12. 12.) They are his Testament, wherein we may find what inheritances he has bequeathed to us, 2 Cor. 3:14, 16; Heb. 10:16; John 14:16. 13.) They are the sword of the Spirit, Eph. 6:17. 14.) Being embraced and known, they make a man happy, Psal. 119:97, 98; Luke 10:42; 16:29; Psal. 1:2; Rev. 1:3. 15.) When the Scriptures are neglected, or condemned, they plunge men into all misery, Heb. 2:3; Matt. 22:29; Psal. 50:16.

Question 6.—*May we attribute any authority or inspiration to various of the versions?*

*Answer*—No version may be placed on equal authority with the original. For, 1.) No version has anything important which the Hebrew and Greek sources do not have more fully, since in the source not only the matter and sense, but the very words were dictated by the Spirit of God, Isa. 8:20. 2.) It is one thing to be an interpreter, and another to be a prophet. The prophet, being moved by God cannot err; but the interpreter as a man lacks no human quality since he is always liable to err, *cf.* Luke 10:26. 3.) All versions are streams; the original text, the fountain from which they flow. Nevertheless, we must not deny all authority or inspiration to the versions. Here we must carefully distinguish a twofold divine authority: one of things (*substance*), the other of words (*form*). Versions may have the substance of doctrine (*i.e.*, things) which constitutes the internal form of the Scriptures. The words, being an accident of writing, compose the accidental and external form. Only the source has both, the things and the words. Although a private person may be ignorant of the languages, he does not cease to gather the fidelity of a version as to things themselves from the analogy of faith and the connection of doctrines, John 7:17. Christ's sheep are promised a measure of this gift, John 10:27; 1 Cor. 2:15. Although any version made by fallible men cannot be considered divine and infallible with respect to the terms, yet it can well be considered such as respect to things, since it faithfully expresses the divine truth of the sources even as the word which the minister of the gospel preaches does not cease to be divine and infallible and to establish our faith, although it may be expressed by him in human words.

Question 7.—*What is the chief end of translating the Scriptures into the Vulgar Languages?*

*Answer*—The chief end is twofold: 1.) That all men may know that good and acceptable way of worshipping the true God, Col. 3:16. 2.) That men might, through patience and comfort, come to be possessed of that hope which is revealed therein, Rom. 15:4.