

The other blessing I refer to is "the Book of Common Prayer," which serves not only as our guide and assistant in public worship, and in most simple and spiritual language leads us with one mind and one voice to praise and worship God; but it also provides us with Confessions of Faith, and standards of doctrinal truth, by means of which the maintenance of a full and pure system of Christian belief is always preserved, and the Gospel-message necessarily set forth before men.

The weakness of man is so extreme, the temptation to evil so great, and false doctrine so agreeable to our natural inclination, that we may truly bless God that we have not been left, each of us to search out for himself, without such a guide to help us, the great and essential truths contained in the Word of God.* And when we number up the amount of the ever-varying and increasing interpretations affixed to the same passages of Scripture, and affecting most important doctrines; and when we so often hear of the falling away of whole congregations, as well as of individuals, from the faith

* "Q. What need we Catechisms, while we have the Bible!

"A. Because the Bible contains all the whole body of religious truth, which the ripest Christian should know, but are not all of equal necessity to salvation with the greatest points, and it cannot be expected that ignorant persons can cull out these most necessary points from the rest without help. A man is not a man without a head and heart, but he may be a man if he lose a finger or a hand, but not an entire man, nor a comely man without hair, nails, and nature's ornaments. So a man cannot be a Christian or a good and happy man, without the great, most necessary points in the Bible, nor an entire Christian without the rest. Life and death lieth not on all points alike, and the skilful must gather the most necessary points for the ignorant: which is a Catechism."

"Q. But are not the articles of our Church, and the confessions of Churches, their religion?

"A. Only God's Word is our religion as the divine rule; but our confessions, and books, and words, and lives, show how we understand it."—*Baxter's Catechism.*"