

the principle of a well defined formulated creed are always the most loyal to the plenary inspiration, the infallibility, and absolute authority of Holy Scripture.

What, then, is the use of Confessions of Faith? To this we reply, that their use is simply to define how each denomination understands the teachings of God's Word. The *Bible* is the Divine rule: the *Confession* is the human interpretation of that rule. The Bible is the acknowledged Standard of what we *ought* to believe: The Confession is the explicit definition of what we *do* believe. It is an unquestionable fact, that the bare acknowledgment of the Bible, as the infallible rule of faith and manners, is not sufficient to secure full agreement in either creed or practice. Two or more persons may be thoroughly agreed in that acknowledgment, and yet their creed may be very diverse. The one may be an Arminian; the other a Calvinist. The one may be a sprinkler in Baptism; the other an immersionist. The one may stand up for close the other for open communion. Such a phenomenon does not arise from any defect in the Scriptures. It is not because the Bible gives an uncertain sound, or presents to one a view of doctrine or duty totally different from that which it presents to another. It arises from the diversity of medium through which different persons look at the inspired Word. It is a well known law of nature, that every object assumes the colour of the medium through which it is looked at. The actual colour of the object is unchangeably the same, but it apparently varies, according to the colour of the medium through which it is surveyed. In like manner, Bible truth is, like its Author, immutably the same; yet through a diversity in the early training, or the intellectual power, or the moral state, or some other attributes of those whose attention is directed to it, it assumes a very different aspect to their apprehension, and what is received as wholesome truth by the one is regarded as poisonous error by the other.

Let it be supposed, then, that some particular denomination should sweep away all its subordinate standards, and proclaim that, henceforth, its only basis of union will be the simple acknowledgment of the Holy Scriptures. What then? The *Unitarian* will come forward and cordially make that acknowledgment, and though he rejects the fundamental article of the Christian faith—the supreme Deity of Christ, he must be accepted. The *Socinian* will come forward and very cordially accept the simple formula which constitutes the term of communion, and although he rejects the atonement which is the sinner's only hope, he must be received into full fellowship. Even the *Universalist* will cordially accept the basis of union, and although he rejects the doctrine of endless punishment, than which there is not a more plainly revealed article of the Christian faith, he must be at once admitted to membership and privilege. What sort of an ecclesiastical omnibus would a church be that could open its doors to such a motley crowd? Would it be possible to discover in such a corporation any of the lineaments of that church which is "the pillar and the ground of the truth?" How would it be possible for such an ecclesiastical fraternity to obey the Divine injunction: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions