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THE BIBLE AND CONFESSIONS OF FAITH.

That "the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants" is an aphorism which, from the days of Chillingworth, has been a household word, throughout evangelical Christendom. Whatever failure there may be in the practical application of it, it is a principle generally acknowledged by all classes of Protestants, that the Bible is a Divine Revelation—infallible in all its utterances—sufficient for all the purposes for which a Revelation is needed, and therefore a full and authoritative directory regarding "what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man." Whatever may be the practical use made of that Word, it is the generally recognised standard by which are to be tried the faith and practice of individuals, the doctrines, worship, discipline and government of churches, and the constitution and administration of nations. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

If the Bible be thus the inspired, sufficient, authoritative, and exclusive rule of faith and morals, the question may very properly come up: What is the use of those formularies commonly designated Creeds and Confessions of Faith? What need is there for any other bond of union amongst the members of a Christian society, than just the simple acknowledgment of the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and practice? What need is there for any other bulwark against the inroads of error and heresy, than just the requirement from all the members of the church, of a simple confession of a cordial belief in the infallible teachings of God's Word? Would not such an acknowledgment serve all the purposes of the most elaborate human formularies, and furnish a more explicit testimony to the Divine authority and absolute supremacy of Holy Scripture? Would it not be an act of veneration for the Divine Word to sweep away all decrees of Synods, Assemblies and Councils, and adopt, as the only Term of Communion, the forementioned simple formula?

In reply to such questions it may be remarked, that Creeds and Confessions of Faith are not intended either to supplant or supplement the Scriptures as the rule of faith. They are not framed and adopted on the assumption that there are defects in Holy Scripture. On the contrary, they are based on the absolute supremacy of God's Word. Whatever authority they possess is derived from that supremacy. Their binding obligation on the conscience is not derived from any man or any body of men; but from their conformity to the Divine and infallible Standard of truth and duty. That such formularies in the Christian Church do not tend to diminish veneration for the Sacred Scriptures, as is sometimes asserted, is evident from the fact, that those who are most tenacious of