

5. Personal Confession:

- **MAKE SURE LATEST VERSION OF THIS (SANS RED) IS UPLOADED TO MY WEB SITE. SHADOW FILE IS IN THIS SAME DIR.**
- pp196-197: Personal Confession.
- As you are reading thru the WCF, create a Word Document that contains the parts you agree with, and the parts you disagree with. This will make writing your own confession much easier.
- This essay will be in outline format rather than the traditional 5-9 paragraph prose we normally use.
- Turn in, in 5 sections. Each section is an expansion of previous section. Correct previous section and add new sections. Do NOT erase grades at top.
- The Syllabus WCF does not contain all the chapters in the complete WCF. Your own confession only needs to have the same chapters as the syllabus WCF plus six extra: XXV - XXX. These chapters are in the complete WCF found at <http://www.opc.org/documents/CFLayout.pdf>, but were not included in the Syllabus WCF. You do not have to include any other missing chapters.
- Use the format from the document that I email out. This is a PDF document that is an example of what your own confession must look like.
- Personal confession must be in format that is shown in the above PDF. For example, the white space shown in the example must be used in your confession. Part of the reason is that if you turn this in to some other organization – say a Christian college – they are not going to read a block of dense text. This is especially a problem when writing resumes'. If you write a dense paragraph the boss is not going to read it, and you won't get the job.
- Note that the example confession contains the text of the WCF. In your confession, only the chapter titles will come from the WCF. The actual explanation of each chapter must be in your own words.
- Spell each chapter the same as the WCF (including capitalizations).
- Make a minimum of two statements under each heading (each of these will be at the "capital letter" level of the outline) and support each statement with at least two scripture references. More statements and references may be used if you desire.
- Most of the "capital letter" sections must be at least 4 sentences. It will be difficult to give sufficient explanation of the chapter topic if your section is shorter than this. Some sections might be straightforward enough to use only 2 sentences, but most will require more.
- Pick two of the WCF subsections that best express your position and use them to help you.

- The contents of your confession (the subsections under the title) must be your own. It must be in your own words; you may NOT copy the WCF even if you agree with it.
- **Your confession is not a dissertation on what you don't believe, but what you do believe.** If a chapter primarily contains what you disagree with concerning the topic, I will count off. Focus on what is true, not on what is false. You may contrast falsehood against truth, but do not make it the focus of the section.
- If there is a chapter of the WCF that you disagree with (for example, "God's Eternal Decree"), you still must include the chapter. However, you will change the title and explain it as you understand it.
- Be careful about colloquial (informal) language usage. For example, rather than "Providence is a tricky term; some confuse it with ...," say this: "Some confuse providence with ..."
- Make clear statements so you don't become an "inadvertent heretic".
- Scriptures will not be footnoted, nor even referenced. You must actually quote Scripture in text of the subsection.
- Do not put "I believe...". Must state truth, not you believe truth.
- Must be consistent – can't claim one thing and then later contradict it.
- Scripture verse may not contradict your point. It also may not be completely off topic.
- Will have 33 Roman numerals in your outline of your confession. Each Roman numeral is based upon a chapter of WCF. Each Roman numeral will contain at least two paragraphs (based upon articles in the WCF's chapter).
- Shortest paper ever turned into McKinney WV class was 14 pages. This is your longest essay of the three years.
- If the confession is in the incorrect format, it will be returned w/o grading. You will be required to reformat (paper is too big for grader to try to fix). Paper will be marked late. Inconsistent Bible version will be returned w/o grading.
- Use same numbers as in WCF. When you skip a section, just put "skip" in that section.
- STAY ON TOPIC.
- **(STUDENT ALERT)** are notes to take especial notice of.
- Introductory paragraph
 - Can use first or second person.
 - State which Bible version you will use in rest of statement.
- Chapter II: Of God, and of the Holy Trinity:
 - Must say He is infinite and Trinity. If you use "omni-" words, elaborate.
 - Love: Focus on other attributes rather than this.
- Chapter III: Of God's Eternal Decree.
 - This chapter in the personal confession must include two issues:
 - (1) Whether all things that come to pass are decreed by God or not.

- (2) Whether God decrees who will be saved and not (both men and angels).
 - If you do not believe that God decreed all of this from the beginning, then call this section "Of God's Eternal Foresight."
 - Elect:
 - Must explain since this is in Scripture.
 - Reformed: Those whom God chose before foundation of earth.
 - Armenian: Those in the church.
 - If you don't want to use this term, substitute "believer".
 - Do not use terms from other side of argument to explain your own. Don't redefine terms.
- Chapter IV: Of Creation
 - Must include how long you believe God took to create the world. Day-age? 24/7? Gap theory (gap of time bet 1:1 and 1:2)?
- Chapter V: Of Providence
- Chapter VI: Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and Punishment Thereof:
 - **(STUDENT ALERT)** Must have 3 sections in this chapter.
 - **(STUDENT ALERT)** Must define original sin and its effect today.
- Chapter VII: Of God's Covenant with Man
 - **(STUDENT ALERT)** Explain covenant itself, then covenant of works and covenant of grace.
 - See Galatians, especially chapter 3.
 - At least two scriptures must mention covenant.
- Chapter VIII: Christ the Mediator:
 - Must include verse on Christ being mediator!
- Chapter IX: Of Free will
 - Very Important.
 - In innocence, man had free will. Now, fallen, we cannot choose God to be saved. After conversion, we are able to choose God.
 - Actual desire to follow God is Holy Spirit's drawing of us. From human perspective, it appears we choose God, but from His perspective He first regenerated us.
 - As Christians we have the ability to choose God's will, but never perfectly on earth bec of our sin nature.
 - Must explain if we use our free will to choose God for salvation, or if God chooses us apart from our free will.
- Chapter X: Of Effectual calling
 - If you don't believe in irresistible grace, then don't call this section "Effectual calling"; call it "Prevenient Grace", or "Calling to Salvation", or "Calling".
 - Both Calvinists and Armenians believe in prevenient grace. This is God's favor and help that comes to us before our salvation.

- Calvinist view:
 - Prevenient grace is irresistible for the elect.
 - It decides for you because you are incapable of deciding for yourself (you are dead in your trespasses and sins).
 - May deny this in your confession.
 - Means: Those whom God predestined to save, He saves. We have no choice bec we are dead.
 - 5 points: Irresistible Grace.
 - The way God calls is thru Word of God. Ro 10:8-10
- Armenian view:
 - Prevenient grace is resistible by anyone.
 - In the hearing of the word, God allows you to execute your free will and believe.
 - It's grace that comes ahead of your decision and gives you the power to accept Christ.
 - But you can resist it.
 - You can choose to be saved or not, and you can choose to stay saved or not.
- This will be the dividing point in the free will/predestination debate.
- **(STUDENT ALERT)** Can God's call to salvation be resisted?
- Chapter XI: Of Justification
 - Will count off if you define justification as being justified. This is not a definition.
 - Forgiveness is a "taking away"; justification is an "adding" (imputation).
 - Legal term.
 - You are guilty, but Christ's obedience is credited to your account.
 - Since we cannot do anything to get it, it must be given to us.
 - Must mention imputation of Christ's righteousness when explaining this. Also, my sins imputed to Christ and He is punished for them.
 - Past tense "saved" is always a reference to J.
 - An act in the past.
 - **(STUDENT ALERT)** Must distinguish between God *making* us righteous and God *declaring* us righteous. Simul iustus et peccator. Rome: Not until purged in Purgatory ("mountain quake" a la Dante).
- Chapter XIII: Of Sanctification
 - **(STUDENT ALERT)** Process of God *making* us righteous.
 - Being made holy. A process. Process consists of obedience.
 - Sanctuary: Meeting room for most churches (Baptist, Presbyterian, etc). Episcopal: Altar and clergy area. Nave is where people are.
 - Sanctuary: Place set aside for special use.
 - Saint: In Bible, this is not people who have done miracles. This is a Christian, a person set aside by God for Himself.

- Both Reformed and Armenian: Sanctification: Obedience can now use free will to obey.
- Glorification: Completion of sanctification
- II Pet 1:2-8: All things given to us pertaining to life and godliness (thus what is missing?). But you must add a decision of the will.
- Virtue: Honorable, pure.
- God gives faith. Add virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness (even to siblings), love. This is process of sanctification.
- v9-10: Do these things and you will never stumble.
- A decision we have to make 100s of times a day.
- Chapter XIV: Of Saving Faith
 - What is it we need to have faith in? Just God (remember that James says the devils believe in God)? What is faith, and what must we have faith in?
 - Does faith alone save, or is it faith and works?
- Chapter XVI: Of Good Works
 - Explain connection between faith and good works. Don't just put this in the negative, but make a positive statement.
- Chapter XVIII: Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation
 - **(STUDENT ALERT)** This is not about salvation or perseverance (that we will continue in faith), but can we know that we are saved.
 - The Roman Catholic position is that we can never know if we will be finally saved since God has not told us.
 - The Reformers thought otherwise.
- Chapter XIX: Of the Law of God
 - Bring out the difference between the moral Law (10 commandments) and the ceremonial Law of the O.
 - Are we still under the Law? In what way "yes" and in what way "no"? Adultery's not legal now, is it?
- Chapter XX: Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience
- Chapter XXV: Of the Church
 - **(STUDENT ALERT)** Must explain the relationship of the visible and invisible church.
- Chapter XXVII: Of the Sacraments
 - What is the purpose of the Sacraments?
 - **(STUDENT ALERT)** Very important: How many are there, and what are they called?
- Chapter XXVIII. Of Baptism
 - Focus on water baptism and its effect and purpose.
- Chapters:
 - [Chapter I.](#) Of the Holy Scripture
 - [Chapter II.](#) Of God, and of the Holy Trinity

- [Chapter III.](#) Of God's Eternal Decree
- [Chapter IV.](#) Of Creation
- [Chapter V.](#) Of Providence
- [Chapter VI.](#) Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof
- [Chapter VII.](#) Of God's Covenant with Man
- [Chapter VIII.](#) Of Christ the Mediator
- [Chapter IX.](#) Of Free Will
- [Chapter X.](#) Of Effectual Calling
- [Chapter XI.](#) Of Justification
- [Chapter XII.](#) Of Adoption
- [Chapter XIII.](#) Of Sanctification
- [Chapter XIV.](#) Of Saving Faith
- [Chapter XV.](#) Of Repentance Unto Life
- [Chapter XVI.](#) Of Good Works
- [Chapter XVII.](#) Of The Perseverance of the Saints
- [Chapter XVIII.](#) Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation
- [Chapter XIX.](#) Of the Law of God
- [Chapter XX.](#) Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience
- skip [Chapter XXI.](#) Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath-day
- skip [Chapter XXII.](#) Of Lawful Oaths and Vows
- [Chapter XXIII.](#) Of the Civil Magistrate
- skip [Chapter XXIV.](#) Of Marriage and Divorce
- added [Chapter XXV.](#) Of the Church
- added [Chapter XXVI.](#) Of the Communion of the Saints
- added [Chapter XXVII.](#) Of the Sacraments
- added [Chapter XXVIII.](#) Of Baptism
- added [Chapter XXIX.](#) Of the Lord's Supper
- added [Chapter XXX.](#) Of Church Censures
- [Chapter XXXI.](#) Of Synods and Councils
- [Chapter XXXII.](#) Of the State of Man After Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead
- [Chapter XXXIII.](#) Of the Last Judgment