

***WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF  
FAITH STUDY WORKBOOK***

**STUDENT MANUAL**

*Written by J. Parnell McCarter*

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**6408 Wrenwood**

**Jenison, MI 49428**

**(616) 457-8095**

***The Puritans' Home School Curriculum***

***www.puritans.net***

## INTRODUCTION

This *Westminster Confession of Faith Study Workbook: Student Manual* provides assignment questions for *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* by Robert Shaw D.D., with an Introductory Essay by Rev. Wm. M. Hetherington, LL. D. *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* by Robert Shaw D.D., with an Introductory Essay by Rev. Wm. M. Hetherington, LL. D., is available through Still Waters Revival Books ( [www.swrb.com](http://www.swrb.com) ), as well as other sources.

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 1

1. What is meant by the term “light of nature”?
2. Explain the nature and extent of man’s theological knowledge from the light of nature.
3. Why has man needed God’s special revelation?
4. To whom has God delivered His special revelation?
5. How does Chapter 1 describe the development of divine special revelation over human history?
6. What characteristics of written communication make it advantageous over spoken communication for the transmission of a body of knowledge over time?
7. Many heretical churches (including the Romish Church, Pentecostal churches, etc.) have asserted continuing divine special revelation. But what is instead the case? And how do we know this from scripture?
8. What does the term ‘canon’ mean?
9. What does II Corinthians 3:14 imply about the sections of scripture?
10. How do we deduce the books to be included in the Old Testament canon?
11. When were the Apocrypha admitted into the list of canonical books?
12. What does “plenary and verbal inspiration” mean?
13. Is the nature of scriptural inspiration plenary and verbal?
14. How does I Corinthians 2:13 bear on the issue of verbal scriptural inspiration?
15. How does II Timothy 3:16 bear on the topic of plenary scriptural inspiration?
16. Is the Church dependent for its existence on the word of God, or is the word of God dependent upon the Church?
17. How do we know from Ephesians 2:19-20 whether the word or Church is dependent?
18. What are some evidences that the Bible is the inspired word of God?
19. What is the ultimate source of our assurance that the Bible is divinely inspired?
20. How do we know from Matthew 22:31-32 that the corpus of doctrine taught in scripture must include not only those doctrines expressly set down but also what may be deduced?
21. What does the Westminster Confession teach about “new revelations of the Spirit” beyond the Holy Scripture?
22. What does the Westminster Confession teach about “traditions of men”?
23. What does Acts 17:10-11 imply about the perspicuity of scripture?
24. In what language was the Old Testament generally written?
25. In what language was the New Testament generally written?
26. How do we know from statements by Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul that the Old Testament of the Jews is the infallible word of God?
27. How does Matthew 5:18 imply the scriptures have been providentially kept pure in all ages?
28. What does John 5:39 teach concerning the duty of all to study the scriptures?
29. What do New Testament quotations from the Greek Septuagint imply about the propriety of translation of the scriptures into the vernacular languages of the peoples?
30. What does the term “analogy of faith” mean, and how does it figure in our interpretation of scripture?
31. Who must be the Supreme Judge in religious controversies?

32. How does this view regarding the Supreme Judge in religious controversies differ from the view of Socinians?
33. How does this view regarding the Supreme Judge in religious controversies differ from the view of Papists?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 2

1. How do we know from scripture that there is but one God?
2. What is the import of noting that the God revealed in scripture is the only living and true one?
3. What is meant by the fact that God is “a pure Spirit”?
4. What is meant by God’s perfections?
5. God’s infinite being comprehends His immensity and omnipresence. What is meant by these terms?
6. How is God self-existent, independent and all sufficient?
7. How is God the fountain of all being?
8. In what sense is God eternal? .
9. How does God’s absolute perfection imply His immutability?
10. How do Biblical prophecies evidence God’s omniscience (i.e., all-knowing character)?
11. What is meant by God being “most absolute”?
12. How is God’s wisdom displayed in His creation?
13. Is it an imperfection in God’s omnipotence that He does nothing that involves a contradiction?
14. What is meant by God’s infinite holiness?
15. How is God’s justice displayed in His legislative, distributive, remunerative and punitive justice?
16. Of what does the goodness of God consist?
17. How is God a God of truth?
18. How are the three persons of the Godhead equal?
19. How are the three persons of the Godhead distinguished from one another?
20. How is the deity of the Son evinced in scripture?
21. How is the deity of the Spirit evinced in scripture?

### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 3

1. What is meant by ‘the decree of God’?
2. How do divine foreknowledge, independence and immutability imply that God decreed all future things?
3. How is God’s eternal decree proved by Ephesians 1:9,11?
4. In contrast to Calvinists, what do Arminians believe about God’s decrees?
5. Genesis 50:20 reads: “...ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” How is this an illustration that God is sovereign over all yet not the author or doer of sin?
6. What is predestination?
7. Of what two branches does predestination consist, depending upon whether one’s destination is heaven or hell?
8. What do Socinians believe concerning election and predestination, in contrast to scripture?
9. Why should we reject that predestination is merely God’s foresight into who would believe?
10. What then is the basis of why certain men have been elected by God to eternal life?
11. What is the relation of God to the means employed to bring a person to salvation?
12. What means are commonly appointed by God to bring an elect human to salvation?
13. What does the Confession teach regarding limited atonement (aka particular redemption) in Chapter 3?
14. What is reprobation?
15. What does the Confession teach regarding reprobation?
16. What ought a belief in predestination effect in us?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 4

1. Which persons of the Trinity were active in the creation of the world?
2. In what span of time did the creation of the world occur?
3. The gap theory suggests that there was a long gap of time between the creation of matter out of nothing and the forming of it in six successive days. This serious error, predicated on a false interpretation of Genesis 1, became popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to seek to reconcile humanistic geological science of the time with scripture. Dr. Shaw, living at the time, seems to have given credence to it. But why is it erroneous and contrary to scripture and the Confession?
4. In what sense was man made in the image of God?
5. What was written in the hearts of men at creation?
6. What was man's initial relationship with God?



## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 5

1. What is providence?
2. What effect should the doctrine of providence effect in us?
3. Does God's providence over all things mean that second causes are not real?
4. What are second causes?
5. God's providence is either ordinary or miraculous. What is meant by His ordinary providence?
6. What is the relation between ordinary providence and human use of means?
7. How are miracles possible?
8. Is God's providence limited only to the good that happens in the world, and not when men do evil?
9. How does Acts 2:23 confirm God's providence extends to all things?
10. To whom is God's special providence extended?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 6

1. Was God's prohibition of eating the forbidden fruit a natural or positive law, and why?
2. Why was the eating of the forbidden fruit not trivial, and what does it say about our transgression of the least of God's laws?
3. Was the Fall outside God's decretive sovereignty?
4. What were the consequences of Adam and Eve's transgressions upon themselves?
5. If there had been no Mediator, what would have immediately occurred to Adam and Eve?
6. Why do only those proceeding from Adam and Eve by ordinary generation (but not extraordinary generation) receive their corrupt nature?
7. What is Original Sin?
8. What did Pelagius and later Socinius believe about Original Sin?
9. How does the analogy between Adam and Christ (as described in Romans 5, for example) affect our understanding of Original Sin?
10. What are some Biblical passages which refute the heresy of Christian perfection, evidencing the remaining sin in all believers?
11. What does sin deserve?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 7

1. How has God been pleased to communicate and provide His blessings to man?
2. What is a “covenant”?
3. How do we know God entered into a covenant (of works) with Adam?
4. With whom did God enter into the covenant of grace?
5. What Biblical passage conveys the idea of the covenant also being a testament?
6. What are the two dispensations of the one covenant of grace?
7. How were members of the two dispensations saved?
8. In what ways is the latter dispensation of the covenant of grace superior to the former?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 8

1. What is a mediator?
2. From when did Jesus' deity commence?
3. From when did His human nature commence?
4. How does the orthodox view of Christ differ from that of Nestorians?
5. How does the orthodox view of Christ differ from that of Eutychians?
6. How does Roman Catholicism promote that there are multiple mediators?
7. What characteristics of Jesus Christ were necessary to qualify Him for the office of mediator between God and man?
8. Jesus Christ was a surety as well as a mediator. What is a surety?
9. Of what did Christ's humiliation consist?
10. What are the several steps of Jesus Christ's exaltation?
11. What does the Westminster Confession say about His active and passive obedience?
12. How were men saved before Christ's incarnation? (Any different from after?)
13. For whom did Christ die?
14. How do we know Christ only died for the elect?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 9

1. How does the Calvinist conception of a “free will” differ from the Arminian conception?
2. How has the freedom of man’s will to will good changed over the course of man’s different states?
3. How do Pelagians, semi-Pelagians, and Arminians - versus Calvinists - differ on man’s ability to convert himself through his natural faculties?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 10

1. How does the external call of the gospel differ from the internal, effectual call?
2. What happens to the will of the sinner who has been effectually called?
3. What is meant by 'God's free and special grace'?
4. How is it possible for those dying in infancy or those who are severely mentally disabled to ever be saved?
5. How do we know it is not possible for those who never profess the Christian religion, but only a heathen religion, to ever be saved?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 11

1. How does the Church of Rome confound justification and sanctification?
2. How do we know the term 'justification' as used in Romans is meant forensically?
3. What of Christ is imputed to believers?
4. Why can we not be saved by an inherent righteousness?
5. What do Arminians teach about justifying righteousness, and how does the Confession contradict it?
6. Why is Biblical justification said to be "of free grace"?
7. When is a believer justified?
8. How do we know the justification of believers was the same in the Old Testament as in the New Testament?

## **QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 12**

1. What is spiritual adoption?
2. Briefly outline the privileges of adoption.



## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 13

1. What is the antinomian view of sanctification?
2. How do we know the antinomian view is false?
3. How do initial regeneration and progressive sanctification differ?
4. How do we know sinless perfection is not possible in this life?
5. What irreconcilable war do believers experience?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 14

1. How does saving faith differ from common faith?
2. Why is saving faith called a work of the Spirit?
3. What is the normal means appointed by God by which a believer comes to have faith?
4. What is the principal object of saving faith?
5. How can faith but not justification admit of degrees?
6. How does Mr. Shaw compare assurance of faith and assurance of sense?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 15

1. How does repentance as an evangelical grace differ from legal repentance?
2. How must we hate sin?
3. To what extent can Christians realistically turn away from sin in this life?
4. What is the relation between repentance and divine pardon of sin?
5. What is wrong with the Romish doctrine of venial sins?
6. Why should secret sins only be confessed to God and not also a priest?
7. When is it necessary to confess one's sin to a Christian brother?
8. When is a more public confession necessary?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 16

1. How do we know if something is truly a good work?
2. Can 'good' intentions transform a work not commanded in the Bible into a good work?
3. What is the relation of faith and good works?
4. What should be the primary motive for good works?
5. What enables believers to do good works?
6. What is supererogation and why is it denounced in the Confession?
7. Why can believers not on the basis of their good works merit eternal life?
8. How are good works of believers accepted by God?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 17

1. What is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints?
2. What do Roman Catholics and Arminians say about this doctrine?
3. Why does the Confession say the saints' perseverance depends not on their free will?
4. Why do the backslidings of saints like David not contradict the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints?
5. What does their perseverance depend on?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 18

1. What is meant by “assurance of grace and salvation”?
2. What is the difference between conjectural persuasion and certain assurance?
3. How do we know assurance of salvation is possible and desirable for Christians?
4. By what Bible taught syllogism is assurance generally attained?
5. What is the best scriptural explanation of how the Holy Spirit bears witness of one’s adoption?
6. Why is assurance of one’s own salvation not of the essence of faith?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 19

1. How did the law of God operate as a covenant of works for our father Adam?
2. Why is the law, considered as a covenant of works, useless for fallen mankind?
3. Why was it necessary after the Fall for God to record the law in writing to man in order that man would know it precisely?
4. Where is God's moral law summarized?
5. For what was the ceremonial law chiefly designed?
6. For what purpose was the judicial law?
7. Who is bound to observe the moral law?
8. What are some uses of the moral law?
9. What is the relation of the moral law and the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 20

1. What are some elements of Christian liberty which are common to all ages – Old Testament and New Testament alike?
2. What are some elements of Christian liberty unique to the New Testament era?
3. Who alone is the proper author of laws which should serve as the basis of all human power and enactments?
4. How may human power in the realm of Church or State – concerning faith, worship or conversation – be exercised, yet so as not to violate Christian liberty?



## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 21

1. What must be the general rule of our religious worship of God?
2. How does religious prayer and veneration of creatures degrade worship?
3. Why ought public prayers be made only in a known tongue?
4. Why ought prayers not be made for the dead?
5. This chapter in the Westminster Confession enumerates all of the valid Biblical ordinances of religious worship. What does that imply about possible ordinances that have been proposed in history that are not enumerated?
6. What elements of worship are enumerated?
7. What part of the Sabbath command is positive and what part is moral?
8. How should the Sabbath day be spent?
9. What are meant by works of necessity and mercy?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 22

1. What is an oath?
2. How do we know it is lawful to take an oath?
3. What is the usual mode of swearing in the Bible?
4. How does a vow differ from an oath?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 23

1. How does the social compact theory of government differ from the view of government testified to in scripture and the Confession?
2. When may a Christian magistrate wage war?
3. What functions may the civil magistrate not take, because they are reserved for the church officers?
4. What duties does the civil magistrate have with respect to religious affairs in the nation?
5. What duty do citizens have to their magistrate, even what that magistrate errs in his religion?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 24

1. What does scripture teach concerning polygamy?
2. Why are Christians not to marry infidels?
3. What are the only legitimate grounds for divorce?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 25

1. What does the Greek word ecclesia” mean?
2. Of whom does the visible church consist?
3. How can someone be in the visible church but not in the invisible church?
4. What is the status of children of believers in the visible church?
5. What is the relationship between salvation and visible church membership, and how is the Roman Catholic Church wrong on this issue?
6. Who alone is head of the Church?

## **QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 26**

1. What communion among Christian churches is ideal?
2. What prevents this ideal of church communion from being realized presently?
3. What are the limits of the believers' communion with God?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 27

1. Of which term in the Greek new testament was the Latin term 'sacrament' intended as an equivalent?
2. Who alone may institute ecclesiastical sacraments?
3. The Roman Catholic Church has added more sacraments than two. How do we know these additions are not Biblical?
4. What were the two Old Testament sacraments, and what were they replaced with in the New Testament?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 28

1. Until when is the sacrament of baptism in effect?
2. What are the 3 chief purposes of the sacrament of baptism?
3. With respect to mode, how do we know sprinkling is allowed?
4. How do we know New Testament baptism has come in the room of Old Testament circumcision?
5. What is the relation of baptism and salvation?
6. Under what circumstances should a person be re-baptized?



## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 29

1. Who instituted the Lord's Supper?
2. What is transubstantiation?
3. Why is transubstantiation wrong?
4. According to divine institution, which elements are to be given to all communicants in the Lord's Supper?
5. On what basis has the Romish Church during its history denied one the elements to all communicants?
6. What is consubstantiation?
7. Which professing Christians ought not be allowed to partake in the Lord's Supper?

## **QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 30**

1. What is the proper relation of the church to the state?
2. To whom is committed the power of church discipline?
3. What are the various levels of church censure, the severity of which will vary depending upon the nature of the offense?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 31

1. When the Church of Scotland adopted the Confession in 1647, what did it affirm as to presbyterian church government?
2. How is Independency contradicted in the Confession?
3. Why is the power of the Church to freely meet and dissolve by the Church's own authority so important?
4. Do church synods and councils have mere consultative powers, or also authoritative powers?
5. What authority do church synods and councils have over civil affairs?

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 32

1. Of what two parts does each human being consist?
2. Which part sees corruption?
3. Which part enjoys immortality?
4. How is the Protestant view of life after death different from the Roman Catholic view of purgatory?
5. What is the moral condition of the souls of believers after death?
6. When will believers get their bodies back?

## **QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 33**

1. What will be the grounds of the believers' acquittal on the Day of Judgment?
2. What will be the evidences of the believers' state on the Day of Judgment?
3. What will be the grounds and evidences of the reprobates' condemnation on the Day of Judgment?
4. When will the Day of Judgment occur?