**A Confessional Survey (Notes)**

**Start with Original Sin unto Total Depravity:**

**WCF 6: 2-4**

2. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.

3. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed; and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

Two Natures Wherein Corrupt Nature co-exists with Regenerate Nature POST Regeneration/Redemption until Glorification after death

WCF. 6: 5. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be, through Christ, pardoned, and mortified; yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

No Way for Humanity to Save Himself (even after Regeneration/redemption)

WCF 7:1. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

7:3. Man, by his fall, having made himself **incapable** **of life by that covenant**, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein he **freely offeret**h unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; **requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved,** and **promising to give** unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life **his Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe….**

7:4 and to the everlasting inheritance, with **all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.**

**7:5** which were, for that time, **sufficient** and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect **in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation;**

Reliance upon Christ’s work alone as fully sufficient unto FULL/COMPLETE. Salvation- not Christ plus… (which begs the question, why we then have a Christ plus way of discovering assurance??? )

8: 5. The Lord Jesus, by his **perfect** obedience, and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, **once offered** up unto God, hath **fully satisfied the justice of his Father**; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.

NOTE:

As of yet, no mention of works of the law required or any such thing related to our justificatiron

E.g. is “Assurance” categorically about assurance of justification (e.g. based on the terms/characteristics of justification) or assurance of sanctification,(e.g. based on the terms/characteristic of sanctification) even if you could say that assurance, not based on sanctification, is a mark of sanctification (a big difference). It is one thing to argue that assurance of justification is based on the terms of sanctification, and other thing to say that assurance is based on the terms of justification as the a hallmark of sanctification.

**The origin of saving faith- God alone**

10:2. This effectual call is of God's **free** and special grace alone, **not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein,** until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby **enabled to answer this call, and to** **embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.**

**Justification (as to free us from the fear of condemnation and hell) by faith alone**

11:1. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also **freely justifieth**: not by infusing righteousness into them, but **by pardoning** their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; **not for anything wrought in them**, **or done by them**, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; **but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them**, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness, by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

2. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, **is the alone instrument of justification**: **yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces,** and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

Westminster wanted to make clear that all the other saving graces is NOT the instruments (means toward) justification (which alone sets us free from fear of condemnation/hell) but rather is a consequence of justification—its part of the package. This means that while we could rightly want/expect to see various “evidences” concerning all the other saving graces (including assurance and sanctification), we can’t then determine our assurance of salvation based on any one experience of the other saving graces lest we then do what the confession blatently instructs us not to do relative to the basis of our justification. **Again:**

not by infusing righteousness into them, but **by pardoning** their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous;

**not for anything wrought in them**, **or done by them**, but for Christ's sake alone;

nor **by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness;**

**but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them**, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness, by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the **gift** of God.

[Being careful to note the difference between imputing (objective grace) and infusing (subjective grace!) Justification by imputing even if sanctification later will be by infusing… key here- is our status with God as set free from the fear of punishment and hell is by imputing/objective grace revealed in saving faith.]

Here again, it can be said that sanctification is a consequence of true and saving faith in so far as saving faith and sanctifying faith are both a consequence of effectual calling by regeneration, not to be confused with basing our assurance of salvation on any thing or one aspect of a thing (such as a particular work of sancrification) as grounds for assurance—rather grounds fdor assureance are solely bases on the grounds for justification—faith alone in Christ alone!

So regarding sanctification:

13.1. They, who are once effectually called, and regenerated, **having a new heart, and a new spirit created in them**, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them:

Note further than perfectly…. And thus the language of “more and more” as to follow the rest of our life until perfected in glory

.. and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified; and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness

13:2. This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man; **yet imperfect in this life,** there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part; whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

How then could we possibly ever attain to assurance by examining our sanctification! It’s a praticcal impossibily unless we either severely reduce the law as to compromise the meaning of full obedience (the Pharisaical problem) OR we severely live in denial that we are in fact keeping the law in some rationalized way…

IN SHORT, as we approach the section on Assurance—there is an overwhelming evidence from the system as a whole that it would be impossible to suggest a that our justification, which is the doctrine that speaks to how we are finaly set free from the fear of condemnation/everlasting hell can by based on anything other than the promises of scripture pertaining to justification itself and on what terms. E.g. if God says we are saved by grace through “faith alone in Christ alone” (his works, his “sanctification.” from the fear of condemnation and everlasting hell.

Thus the doctrine of ‘SAVING” faith:

14.2. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

And not even the”strength” of that faith per its quantity:

3. This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed, and weakened, but gets the victory: growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance, through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.

The doctrine of Christian Assurance

**18:1** such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

HOW?? Could it ever by ‘certain” if at any point it is reliant upon our works of the law- such as the need to examine our specific works of the law??? Already we know the answer!! But the confession goes on:

2. This certainty is **not** a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope; but an **infallible assurance of faith** **founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation,** the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God, which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.

So how to interpret the “inward evidence of those graces….”—AND YET WITHOUT rejecting what the confession has already clarified:

Again, per the above regarding justification:

but **by pardoning** their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; **not for anything wrought in them**, **or done by them**, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; **but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them**, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness, by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

The Confession seems to have this in mind when then next paragraph concerning assurance starts off:

3. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto.

e.g. it is one of many evidence of a Christian maturity even santrification, that we are enabled to more an more trust the “divine truth of the promises of salvation” in scripture such that we cand not only receive it but “rest” in it! Andnotice, by what means do we grow in our faith/maturity/sanctification—“In the right use of ordinarymeans, attain thereunto”. E.g. word, sacrament, prayer, community—as God’s instruments in the hands of the Holy Spirit to bring us to that infallible assurance that is true all along as per thee terms “freely given” as “accented to, received and rested upon” by grace—

**Conclusion:**

Whatever concern we all have for the reality of a “dead faith”—it is NOT the solution to then compromise the biblical doctrine of assurance—rather, it is to see that true and saving assurance based on the terms o four justification is the very context wherein Christian faith isn’t dead, but is alive as motivated by perfect love received e.g. having been set free from the fear of condemnation, we are also set free to with greater zeal and sincerity of love for God and other (vs. love of us trying to be set free from the fear of hell) be inabled finally to more and more approach true love which is the sum of all the commandmens.