



The Westminster Assembly & Confession: An Exercise in Bèzaism; Responses to Fuzzy Gospels Place Emphasis on the Subject Rather Than the Object of Christ

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. “Westminster Assembly” and “Westminster Confession”:

Westminster Assembly, called by the English Parliament to reform the Church of England. It met from July 1643 until February 1649 holding 1,163 sessions at Westminster Abbey. The works produced were generally accepted by Presbyterians throughout the world.

Westminster Confession. A confession of faith of English-speaking Presbyterians. According to the confession, the doctrine of the eternal decree of predestination is that “some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death.”

5. This confession is the foundation of Presbyterian theology but it has found its way into every category of American Christendom. You will recognize several telltale concepts as we consult:

Dillow, The Reign of the Servant Kings, 267-269:

The theology of Westminster completely reversed the doctrine of Calvin. Calvin often used such synonyms for faith as **persuasion, assurance, knowledge, apprehension, perception, or conviction**. The Westminster theology used terms like **accepting, receiving, assenting, resting, yielding, answering, and embracing**—all active words. Saving faith is **not only** believing that God’s word is true, **but** it is “yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God.

NOTE: This concept has been an obvious influence on present-day development of fuzzy gospels that assert salvation is through faith alone in Christ alone but this loses its clarity by the use of abstruse phrases that place emphasis on human involvement beyond faith. Here are a few examples:

- Make Christ Lord
- Yield to the Spirit
- Invite Christ into your heart
- Pray to receive Christ
- Accept Christ into your life

In regard to assurance, they clearly stated that “assurance of grace and salvation, **not being of the essence of faith**, true believers may wait long before they obtain it. Calvin asserted that the “least drop of faith” firmly assures. “But holding out Christ as the ground of assurance as a direct act seems **not to have been regarded as an option** by the Westminster divines” (Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism*, 203). (p. 267)

Believers can lose their assurance because it is **based upon their performance**, how one’s **conscience feels** about one’s performance as he reflects upon his recent behavior. Our good works do not need to be perfect **only sincere** [Westminster Confession, 18:4]. This leads to the inevitable conclusion that perseverance and sanctification are **not based upon a response to God’s love** but upon one’s **intense desire to insure his salvation**. The end result is that **salvation is a payment for sanctification**. (p. 268)

Conclusion. It was Theodore Bèza, with his doctrine of limited atonement, who made the quest for assurance based upon works a necessity. Since Christ did not die for all men, it would not be proper to direct men to Christ for assurance, as Calvin taught, because Christ may not have died for that particular man. Therefore, according to Bèza, assurance must be based on works. (p. 269)