

Semper Reformanda: Confessions and Reformation
San Marino Community Church
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The Scots Confession: Preface

“But since by the infinite goodness of our God, we have received unexpected rest and liberty, we could not do other than set forth this brief and plain Confession of that doctrine which is set before us, and which we believe and confess; partly to satisfy our brethren whose hearts, we suspect have been and are grieved by the slanders against us; and partly to silence impudent blasphemers who boldly condemn that which they have not heard and do not understand.

We do not suppose that such malice can be cured merely by our Confession, for we know that the sweet savour of the Gospel is, and shall be, death to the sons of perdition; but we are considering chiefly our own weaker brethren, to whom we would communicate our deepest thoughts, lest they be troubled or carried away by the different rumours which Satan spreads against us to defeat our godly enterprise, protesting that if any man will note in our Confession any chapter or sentence contrary to God’s Holy Word, that it would please him of his gentleness and for Christian charity’s sake to inform us of it in writing; and we, upon our honour, do promise him that by God’s grace we shall give him satisfaction from the mouth of God, that is from Holy Scripture, or else we shall alter whatever he can prove to be wrong”

The Heidelberg Catechism: Lord’s Day 1

Q. 1 What is your only comfort
in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own,¹
but belong—
body and soul,
in life and in death—²
to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.³
He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,⁴
and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.⁵
He also watches over me in such a way⁶
that not a hair can fall from my head
without the will of my Father in heaven;⁷
in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.⁸
Because I belong to him,
Christ, by his Holy Spirit,
assures me of eternal life⁹
and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready
from now on to live for him.¹⁰

1. 1 Cor. 6:19

2. Rom. 14:8

3. 1 Cor. 3:23

4. 1 Pet. 1:18; 1 John 1:7; 2:2

5. 1 John 3:8

6. John 6:39

7. Matt. 10:30; Luke 21:18

8. Rom. 8:28

9. 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:16

10. Rom. 8:14

2nd Helvetic Confession

5.250. And it is most certain that those works which are done by parents in true faith by way of domestic duties and the management of their households are in God's sight holy and truly good works. They are no less pleasing to God than prayers, fasting and almsgiving. For thus the apostle has taught in his epistles, especially in those to Timothy and Titus. And with the same apostle we account the doctrine of those who forbid marriage or openly castigate or indirectly discredit it, as if it were not holy and pure, among the doctrine of demons.

5.260 We beseech God, our most merciful Father in heaven, that he will bless the rulers of the people, and us, and his whole people, through Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Savior; to whom be praise and glory and thanksgiving, for all ages. Amen.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

7.001 Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God,¹ and to enjoy him forever.²

1. I Cor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36.

2. Ps. 73:24–26; John 17:22, 24.

The Apostles' Creed

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Credo: Writing Your “Own” Confession

“Of what importance is it for the church and the individual believer to maintain continuity with the faith of early Christians? To what extent do you find that the convictions of early Christians enrich or challenge your own convictions?” (Book of Confessions Study Edition [1996], p. 20)

Ideas:

Follow the form of the Apostles’ Creed (i.e. Trinitarian)

Think about how God is weaving together scripture, belief, and experience in your life?

Think about what God is calling you as part of the church to be and to do.

A Prayer for Discernment

Lord, thou who knowest all things:
Do thou search and try me;
For amid this confusion of heart and life,
I cannot, without uncommon aid,
Distinguish between light and darkness
Reality and delusion,
Common and uncommon operations of thy Spirit.
Enable me candidly to compare my heart and life with thy word,
And to draw a just conclusion.

--John Brown, 1722-1787 Scottish shepherd, peddler, soldier, schoolmaster, and, then, pastor

From *Prayers from the Reformed Tradition*, ed. Diane Karay Tripp. Louisville, Witherspoon, 2001.