

The 1689 Confession of Faith, Chapter 18 – “Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation”,
Session # 12 – “Assurance & The Spirit’s Leading”, presented by
Pastor Paul Rendall on August 26th, 2018,
in the Adult Sunday School.

Paragraph 2 – “This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon(d) a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ(e) revealed in the Gospel; and also upon the inward(f) evidence of those graces of the Spirit unto which promises are made, and on the testimony of the(g) Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God; and, as a fruit thereof, keeping the heart both(h) humble and holy.”

(d) Hebrews 6: 11, 19; (e) Hebrews 6: 17-18; (f) 2nd Peter 1: 4-5, 10-11; (g) Romans 8: 15-16; (h) 1st John 3: 1-3

Paragraph 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 i) 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 means, k)attain thereunto: and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper l)fruits of this assurance; so far is it m)from inclining men to looseness.

i) Isaiah 50: 10; Psalm 88; 77: 1-12; k) 1st John 4: 13; Hebrews 6:11-12; l) Romans 5: 1-2, 5; 14:17;

Psalm 119: 32; m)Romans 6: 1-2; Titus 2: 11-12, and 14

A Shorter Definition of Assurance:

Assurance of salvation is the right conclusion that you come to, concerning your state before God, based on the truth of the Scriptures, that your faith in Christ is genuine, and that you have eternal life.

Our Confession in Paragraph 2 says that an infallible assurance is founded first on the blood of righteousness of Christ as revealed in the Gospel, second upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit unto which promises are made, and third, upon the testimony of the Spirit of Adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God. These 3 together make up an assurance which is sure and certain, and it bears the good fruit of keeping the heart both humble and holy. So, in order to open up for you this blessed truth of the inward testimony of the Spirit as the Spirit of adoption, I would like you to turn over with me to Romans 8, verses 14-17.

Romans 8: 9-17 – “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.” Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” “And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors – not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.” “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” “For You did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’” “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

1. The Testimony of the Spirit in His Indwelling and Leading bring Assurance. (verses 9-14)

Now what does it mean to be led by the Spirit of God? Well, in the context of these verses it is that you are not being led by your flesh to continue in sin, but because Christ is in you, because His Spirit is indwelling you, and you now have His Divine life working within you to cause you to think in terms of

pursing righteousness. He will do this gracious work of leading you into all the truth of God's word so that righteousness will take the place in your life that unrighteousness used to hold. As a believer you owe nothing to the flesh, to the remains of the old sinful nature, to live according to its desires and appetites. And so if you find that you are still living according to the flesh, you will die; that is, you will die eternally, if the Holy Spirit is not in your life leading you to repent of sin, and mortify sin. If the Holy Spirit is in your life, if you have been truly converted to Christ you will not tolerate the attempts of the flesh to lead you back into the former ways and habits of sin that you once pursued, and the sinful lifestyle that you formerly lived in. You will resist those motions by the power of the Spirit. If you fall into sin, the Spirit will lead you to mourn over your sin, to confess and give you the power and the understanding of how you can forsake it. By the power of the Spirit you will put to death the deeds of the body; those works and motions of your heart which your sinful corrupt nature produces, and so, you will live. You will have spiritual life within you reigning now, and you will live forever and reign with Christ.

2. The Testimony of the Spirit to the freedom of being a child and son of God the Father brings Assurance.

Verse 15 – “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear” – When you received the Holy Spirit into your heart, you found that He was working in you to deliver you from all of your fears of judgment. It is not the spirit of the law's condemnation that you have received, for it says in verse 1 of this chapter that “There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” And verse 2 – The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.” The law of sin and death that inward sense of condemnation which produces the fear in you that you are always falling short of what God expects you to do. And you used to feel guilty and condemned because you were under the law. Verse 3 – *But* “what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit has been given to you to show you the truths that will set you free. And therefore verse 6 says – “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

John 8: 31-36 – “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.’ “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” “They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone.’ “How can You say, ‘You will be made free?’” “Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.’ “And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.” “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”

You can see here that the person who has believed in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins has been made free by believing the truth that the Son has set them free from sin. They are no longer a slave to it. A slave cannot remain in God's house forever, because God will not tolerate sin in His presence, but because Christ has kept God's law and fulfilled God's law, every jot and tittle of it, faith in Him and what He has done, and what He will do, in giving you the Spirit to free you from your slavery to sin; this brings you into the liberty of the sons of God.

John Calvin on Romans 8: 15 – “He now confirms the certainty of that confidence, in which he has already bidden the faithful to rest secure; and he does this by mentioning the special effect produced by the Spirit; for he has not been given for the purpose of harassing us with trembling or of tormenting us with anxiety; but on the contrary, for this end — that having calmed every perturbation, and restoring our minds to a tranquil state, he may stir us up to call on God with confidence and freedom. He does not then pursue only the argument which he had before stated, but dwells more on another clause, which he had connected with it, even the paternal mercy of God, by which he forgives his people the infirmities of the flesh and the sins which still remain in them. He teaches us that our confidence in this respect is made certain by the Spirit of adoption, who could not inspire us with confidence in prayer without sealing to us a gratuitous pardon: and that he might make this more evident, he mentions a twofold spirit; he calls one

the spirit of bondage, which we receive from the law; and the other, the spirit of adoption, which proceeds from the gospel. The first, he says, was given formerly to produce fear; the other is given now to afford assurance. By such a comparison of contrary things the certainty of our salvation, which he intended to confirm, is, as you see, made more evident.”

This has very practical implications. You no longer are possessed of a spirit of bondage which leads to fear. You receive the Spirit of Adoption by whom you cry out, “Abba Father”.