

**The 1689 Confession of Faith, Chapter 18 – “Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation”,**  
**Session # 13 – “Assurance & The Witness of the Spirit”, presented by**  
**Pastor Paul Rendall on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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) 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1: 4-5, 10-11; (g) Romans 8: 15-16; (h) 1<sup>st</sup> 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) 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

Dr. Sam Waldron says – “Assurance of grace and salvation are not assurance that God’s promises are true.” “It is assurance that they are ours.”

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. The first line of assurance is related to, and is experience in relation to our justification; our being declared righteous by God based upon the work of Christ, when we first believe in the gospel. The second and third lines of assurance are related to our being called and our being sanctified by the Spirit. 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 14-16.

**Romans 8: 14-16** - “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 bearing witness with our spirit brings us the assurance that we are the child of God.**

**Verse 16** – “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

**A Definition of the Witness of The Spirit** - Because He indwells the believer, the Spirit is able to, and often does bear witness with our spirit in a real and immediate sense, to our mind and heart, that we are a child of God. This witness of the Spirit is connected with the sealing of the believer after they have believed in Christ and the gospel. It is also connected to the Baptism of the Spirit, as we shall see over the next few minutes. But the reality of the Spirit's witness with our spirit should be understood primarily in relation to His confirmation, to our spirit, of the reality of all of the blessings and the benefits of our salvation being made over to us. It is His telling those who have believed that He is the Paraclete; the One called alongside to help us on to holiness and to convey to us all the spiritual blessing which Christ has purchased for us and which the Father has chosen to give us because of His everlasting love for us. This witness of the Spirit continues at many point during the ongoing work of progressive sanctification in the believer's life. It consists of the Spirit's conveying to them Christ's approval and His pleasure in them; His love of their love and obedience rendered to Him. When a person first believes in Christ they are given the Holy Spirit, and then the Bible declares, that this witness of the Holy Spirit is borne to the spirit of the Christian that they are the child of God. And this witness is not just conveyed to them once, but by many impressions over the course of their Christian life, it is conveyed to their soul that they do indeed belong to God and are His child.

**There is first of all a witness of the Spirit to our spirit upon our having been justified by faith.**

**Romans 5: 1-5** – “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” ‘And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character, and character hope.” “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

The witness of the Spirit with our spirit testifies of God's love to us, in that He has undertaken the great work of our salvation. We have been justified by faith in Christ. We therefore come to have peace with God. We now have access to God through Christ by faith into this grace in which we stand and we are able to rejoice in the hope; the sure prospect of knowing more and more, the glory of God in our lives, leading us on to eternal glory.

**There is, further, a witness of the Spirit with our spirit in relation to our being sealed by Him.**

**Ephesians 1: 13** – “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

I believe that this truth is linked to the sealing of the believer by the Spirit, and the Baptism of the believer by the Holy Spirit and it is by this means that the new believer is given this awareness of the Spirit's indwelling as a guarantee of their inheritance, (It is a guarantee of the all the work that the Holy Spirit will perform in their life; to illumine, to convince of sin and righteousness, to cause them to see their need of believing the truth of the Bible and living a life of faith and holiness in relation to that truth) until the their final redemption comes when they are raised from the dead and glorified together with Christ.

**John Gill says this:** “That this “sealing” is to be understood of the confirming, certifying, and assuring the saints, as to their interest in the favour of God, and in the blessings of grace, of every kind, and their right and title to the heavenly glory; and the seal of these things is not circumcision, nor baptism, nor the Lord's supper, nor even the graces of the Spirit; but the Spirit himself, who witnesses to the spirits of believers the truth of these things, and that as a “spirit of promise”: so called, both because he is the Spirit promised, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, whom the Father and Christ had promised, and who was sent by them; and because he usually seals, or certifies believers of the truth of the above things, by opening and applying a word of promise to them: and which he does also, as the “Holy” Spirit; for this sealing work of his leaves a greater impress of holiness upon the soul, and engages more to acts of holiness; wherefore the doctrine of assurance is no licentious doctrine; no persons are so holy as those who are truly possessed of

that grace; and as for such who pretend unto it, and live in sin, it is a certain thing that they in reality know nothing of it.”

## **2. What then is the ongoing Witness of the Spirit with our spirit?**

**It is a communication of the sense of God’s presence and blessing which is given to the believer, not constantly or continually, but with most Christians this witness is regularly conveyed to their spirit according to his sovereign working in relation to their sincere faith in Christ and their obedience to His word.**

I believe that it is out of this being sealed with the Spirit, and having been given the Spirit to indwell the believer, that the immediate witness is then given to the spirit of the person who has believed the gospel. The sealing is a one-time act. The indwelling is a permanent gift. The witness of the Spirit with our spirit is not simply a one-time act or a permanent gift, it is the awareness of the believer in their mind and heart that the Spirit is with them and working in them. And it is this very awareness of His work which brings assurance that we are a child of God. 1<sup>st</sup> John 4: 13 – “By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.” The believer has been born again by the Spirit and then they are indwelt by the Spirit in their conversion in relation to the belief of the truth of the gospel. And when they know that they have believed in the truth, then they begin to know the reality of this witness to their own spirit that they have and are doing the right thing in believing the gospel and the word of God; that they are doing the right thing to repent of their sins, and to pursue holiness; that they are doing the right thing to live their life unto God and in love for Christ and the brethren to go about to obey the whole body of truth which is found in the Scriptures.

**Charles Simeon says on Romans 8: 16** - “The Spirit, as a “Spirit of adoption,” testifies to the believer’s soul, that he belongs to God. Not that this testimony is given without any reference to the Scripture; yet it is imparted in a more instantaneous manner, and in a far higher degree, at some times than at others. God by His Spirit sometimes “sheds abroad His love in the heart” in such a measure, and shines so clearly on the work He has already wrought there, as to convey immediately a full persuasion and assurance of an interest in his favour. As by “the sealing of the Spirit” He stamps his own image on His children for the conviction of others, so by “the witness of the Spirit” He testifies of their adoption for the more immediate comfort of their own souls. These manifestations are vouchsafed, for the most part, to prepare the soul for trials, to support it under them, or to comfort it after them: but they cannot be explained for the satisfaction of others [Note: We cannot convey to any man a just idea of sensations which he has never felt; they must be experienced in order to be understood. The work of the Spirit in regeneration is not fully understood even by those who are the subjects of it, notwithstanding its effects are as visible as those of the wind, Joh\_3:8. We cannot expect, therefore, that his less visible operations should be more intelligible to those who have never experienced them at all. See Rev\_2:17.]; yet may they be sufficiently proved from Scripture to be the privilege and portion of true believers [Note: See Rom\_8:15; 2Co\_1:21-22; and Eph\_4:30; which clearly shew, that the Holy Spirit does operate on the souls of God’s people, and perform towards them the office both of a sanctifier and a comforter.]