

**The 1689 Confession of Faith, Chapter 18 – “Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation”,
Session # 14 – “Assurance & The Baptism of the Spirit”, presented by
Pastor Paul Rendall on September 9th, 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.

1. The Witness of the Spirit is not simply an act which takes place at the beginning of the Christian life, like Spirit Baptism is.

In speaking to you about this truth of the immediate witness of the Spirit, I want to also emphasis that this is not an experience which is uniformly experienced in a known and perceived way in every single Christian, nor is it to be sought for, like some people wrongly seek for the experience of the Baptism of the Spirit after conversion. There is only one baptism of the Spirit in the life of every believer, and that is what takes place in connection with the New Birth at the beginning of the Christian life. There was only one Day of Pentecost in which the whole fledgling Church was baptized with the Spirit. But after the gift of regeneration is given, and the Spirit Himself is given to indwell the individual believer, they are placed into the mystical spiritual body of Jesus Christ, by the Spirit baptizing them into that body. It is an act which is done once for all and its effects last for all time. But the Spirit’s bearing witness with our spirit will take place, for most believers, in a regular and on-going way throughout our Christian life. There may be great variety, however, in the experience of individual Christians in this regard. The right formula to understand the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that there is one baptism and many fillings of the Spirit. One baptism and many acts of the Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are children of God Let’s think a little more about the once-for-all baptism of the Holy Spirit of every believer, and I believe that this will help us to better understand the witness of the Spirit in assuring the believer of their salvation.

1st Corinthians chapter 12, and verses 1-13 – “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.” “Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.” “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” “There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.” “And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.” “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the

same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.” “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He will.” “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.” “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into the one Spirit.”

Now, the apostle has been talking here in chapter 12 about the ministries and the gifts which were bestowed upon the members of Christ’s universal Church, in the days of the early Church, in the days of the apostles, when these gifts that are listed in verses 8-10 were in existence. These gifts that are listed – “the word of wisdom through the Spirit, the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, faith by the same Spirit, gifts of healings by the same Spirit, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues, were manifested for the profit of all in those days. If you want to see a list of the normative gifts, the gifts that would remain in existence throughout the Church age, you will find them in Romans chapter 12, verses 6-8. But, I want you to see that there are truths about the Spirit and His holy working which are given here which apply to all believers in the whole Church age.

First of all, that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed. If you are going to be a Christian and live the Christian life, do not think that you can swear and take the Lord’s name in vain, and speak out both sides of your mouth like that. It simply will not do. Either Jesus is the Holy Lord of Glory, or He is not. And if you have believed in Him with saving faith, you have come confessing His sinless perfection, and your need of Him not only to save you from your sins, but also to guide You into all the truth by His Spirit as you learn to do His will. The Lord Jesus should always be seen by you as most blessed forever. And it will be something that you will resolve, that by His grace you will reverence Him in your speech and conduct. You will prove yourself to be a hypocrite and gross sinner if you think that you can live that kind of life in which can go around say two things which are contradictory such as both saying that Jesus is Lord and that He is accursed. Jesus cannot be accursed because He is God made manifest in the flesh. And He is your holy Savior and Lord, both, at the same time, and at all times. And so, if He is holy in this way, and you have received the Holy Spirit, you will not say that He is accursed.

Also, no can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit, and so when we hear such a thing coming from the lips of a young believer, professing their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it certainly ought to be to us a confirmation of their true and saving faith. Romans chapter 10, verses 9 and 10 – “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” “For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.” What is the new believer confessing? He is confessing Jesus as Lord. However many persons might try to say that they are taking Jesus to be their Savior, and yet they cannot take him to be their Lord at this time. It cannot possibly be spiritually true. When they say such a thing they only show that they do not yet understand the way of truth as they ought. The Bible very clearly teaches that when a person comes savingly to believe in Jesus, they come to Him calling upon Him as Savior and Lord. They have not come to simply be delivered from the punishment and penalty of their sins. They have come to Him with the whole-hearted desire to learn His good way, and to do His good will. This, truly, is one of the indications that a person is a true Christian; when they confess with their mouth Jesus as Lord.

We are, however, talking about assurance and the Baptism of the Spirit. And so, when we come to verse 11, we see that the same Spirit works all of these things; that He distributes the various gifts that He gives to believers, “as He wills”. Whether it was the revelatory gifts of the apostolic age, or whether it is the normative gifts that are given by Him during the rest of the Church age, He gives them to each believer according to His purpose; that is, concerning each individual person’s function in the body of Christ. The use of the word “body” is meant I believe, to be understood both on the level of the Universal Church and the local church of which the individual person is a part. When a person is baptized spiritually into the body of Christ, they are not being baptized into a local church but into the Universal Church. Nevertheless, the gift that they are given will normally be used primarily in relation to the local church that that believer is a

part of, rather than the Universal Church, or those believers outside that church, unless they are called to a wider ranging ministry in evangelism or preaching the word of God to others outside of the local church. The Holy Spirit, in His work of baptizing the believer, gives to them a gift which is suitable to that particular purpose which God has them, both in relation to the local church and the Universal Visible Church. So, in verses 12 and 13, we find a further explanation of this important truth. The body of Christ that we are baptized into is one body. “All the members of that one body, being many, are one body, and so also is Christ.” This is not speaking primarily of the local church here, but Christ’s Universal Mystical Spiritual Body.

The use of the gift or gifts imparted to the individual believer by the Spirit will be something that will most certainly be used in relation to the local church of which they are a member, but that believer can and does also have influence upon all believers everywhere in every church, as the Spirit wills. This does not mean that a person can be a member of the Universal Church without thinking about their responsibility to a particular local church which they should join. And it does not mean that they can see themselves as being independent, in their ministry of their gift, apart from a local church of which they should be a member. It simply means that the influence of their gift and the personal ministry of that gift may possibly extend quite widely outside of the local church involvement, as the leaders of that local church approve of it. And therefore the person under consideration has confirmed for them by the local church of which they are a part, in having this wider ministry than simply to the local church.

This has relation to the doctrine of assurance. We as Christians have all been baptized into one body (the Universal Church). We have all been made to drink of one Spirit. And so, we should realistically be able and willing to love all Christians everywhere, even though have united with a local church which holds to a very particularized doctrinal statement, even as we do here in this place. The baptism of the Spirit is one Baptism which leads, or should lead, to endeavoring to keep the unity of the faith in that local body, that local representation of the Church. But all believers should be able to recognize the reality of the faith of many other Christians around them who they may not entirely agree with, doctrinally speaking. We know that we are a true Christian if we love the brethren, it says in 1st John 3: 14 – “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.” “He who does not love his brother abides in death.”

This does not mean that we simply love those Christians in the local church that we are a member of. It means that we love all the Christians that we meet everywhere. If they have truly believed in the gospel of Christ, as it is laid out in the Bible, if they have received and do receive the word of God as the authoritative word for every area of their life and practice, we ought to be able to have fellowship with them, even if they are in a different denominational or church setting. This is the importance of Baptism and assurance. This is the importance of Baptism and church membership; that it is not enough simply to say that you are a Christian, but that you must show you are a Christian by joining with the local church, and not think that you can be a maverick, a lone-ranger Christian. If you have truly believed in Christ, the Spirit will bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God, but He has purposes for your life in relation to a local church of believers, that your ministry is needed and valuable to give what you have to give spiritually, to them. And, then, that they are able to give to you what you need as well, in order for you to grow up into Christ, and not be permanently stunted or a babe for the rest of your life.

2. So let’s think about the Baptism of the Spirit in relation to the witness of the Spirit with our spirit that we are children of God.

Ephesians 4, verses 1-6 – “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in your all.”

There is one baptism it says here. And that baptism, as we have seen, is the Baptism of the Spirit which takes place at the beginning of the Christian life where we are placed into the body of Christ, and made spiritually to drink of the Spirit’s life, and work, and ministry in our lives; a work which leads us to holiness. And that holiness is defined for us here as walking worthy of the holy calling wherewith we have been called;

to be humble and gentle and longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, and endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, our spiritual unity with other believers in the Spirit, by being peaceable and peace-makers; that we would be humble and gentle and willing to learn the Bible way of doing things.

Therefore, to sum up the relationship between the Baptism of the Spirit and the Witness of the Spirit, I believe that what the Bible is teaching here, what the apostle Paul is teaching here, is that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place once, at the very beginning of the Christian life; a work which is related to the Spirit's work in regeneration. That this Baptism places us into the Universal Body of Christ and has definite implications to the way that we as a true believer will walk and live out the grace that has been given to us by Christ, in living our Christian life; of this there can be no doubt. We will love God, and we will love the brethren, and we will show that love by joining a local church. "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized (with water baptism, showing forth our identification with Christ and what He and the Holy Spirit have done for us); and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." (Acts 2: 41)

And so, as the Christian goes about to follow Christ by keeping His word, the Spirit will witness with their spirit that they are a child of God, and also that they are a part of the Universal Church. As they then go about to live their life to God and love the brethren, a definite impression by the Holy Spirit will be given to them; to their mind and affections, and their conscience, which will reinforce to them that they have done the right thing in believing the gospel, and in continuing to believe and obey all of the word of God. And so, as the Christian continues to consistently live this way, the Spirit will continue to speak peace and a sense of blessing to them, as they live out the doctrinal and practical truths of the word of God given to them in the Bible. Their mind and heart most definitely come to understand their personal interest in Christ as they believe these truths, and as they seek to do the will of God, and to know Christ better. This bearing witness, the Holy Spirit with our spirit, is not something which we sense always, because it is something that He, the Spirit, has sovereign control of, and graciously grants us this, His witness, when He pleases, as we exercise faith in Christ and in His word, and attempt to live the life of the sincere obedient Christian.

William Plumer on Romans 8: 16 – "Several things the Spirit of God certainly effects in the hearts of his people. He convinces them of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, John 16: 8-11. He reveals to them the way of salvation by a Redeemer, John 15: 26; 16: 14; Gal. 1: 16. He works in them all the Christian graces. Gal. 5: 22, 23. He strengthens all the good principles which he implants, Eph. 3: 16; Col. 1: 11. Having done all this, it would be marvelous if he gave to the soul no testimony of his presence and of its own gracious state. Many, perhaps with an unwise curiosity, ask how can the Spirit testify to us our acceptance with God? And some have said he never gives his witness except through the word. But we know not the way of the Spirit in any of his operations, natural or spiritual, Eccl. 11:5; John 3: 8. He is a sovereign, and divides his gifts severally as He wills, 1st Cor. 12: 2. To deny the work of the Spirit because we know not the manner of it is as unwise as to deny that the wind blows because we cannot explain the phenomena attending it. It is freely admitted that God's Spirit honors his word in all his work in us, and that he never witnesses contrary to his word; but no man can prove that the Holy Spirit does not directly and immediately comfort, enlighten and animate the people of God, giving them good hopes, bright prospects and delightful persuasions of their interest in Christ. Experienced Christians know that he does wonderful things for them, and that his presence converts night into day, dungeons into palaces, and racks and tortures into harmless things.

This witness of the Spirit is not by voices from heaven, nor by dreams, nor by senseless impulses, nor by a fanatical delight in some words of scripture; but by his testimony concurring with the clear and honest convictions of our own minds and hearts. The Spirit, by whom we have been born again, shines on his own blessed work within us, and we see the infallible tokens of our newness of life. True this doctrine may be abused, but if we deny every doctrine that is abused, we shall have a very short creed. Thomas Scott says: "This witness of the Spirit is borne along with that of our own consciences, not without it, nor against it; and it coincides with the testimony of the Holy Spirit, in the scripture, and must be proved and assayed by it." "God's Spirit never contradicts himself, as he would do, if he were to persuade a bad man that he was a child of God, or a good man that he was a child of the wicked one." "Such a persuasion comes from the father of lies." "If the foregoing be not true, how can a believer ever attain to assurance of faith or of hope?"

Robert Haldane on Romans 8: 16 – “We have this testimony when we possess the consciousness of cordially acquiescing in God’s plan of salvation, and of putting our trust in Christ ; and when we are convinced that His blood is sufficient to cleanse us from all sin, and know that we are willing to rest on it; and when in this way, and in this way alone, we draw near to God with a true heart, sprinkled from an evil conscience in the discernment of the efficacy of His atonement, thus having the answer of a good conscience towards God. And we have the above testimony confirmed to us when we experience and observe the effects of the renovation of our souls in the work of sanctification begun and carrying on in us; and that not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world. In all this the Holy Spirit enables us to ascertain our Sonship, from being conscious of, and discovering in ourselves, the true marks of a renewed state. But to say that this is all that is signified by the Holy Spirit’s testimony, would be falling short of what is affirmed in this text; for in that case the Holy Spirit would only help the conscience to be a witness, but could not be said to be a witness Himself, even another witness besides the conscience, which the text asserts.”

“What we learn, therefore, from it is, that the Holy Spirit testifies to our spirit in a distinct and immediate testimony, and also with our spirit in a concurrent testimony. This testimony, although it cannot be explained, is nevertheless felt by the believer; it is felt by him, too, in its variations, as sometimes stronger and more palpable, and at other times more feeble and less discernible. As the heart knoweth its own bitterness, in like manner a stranger intermeddles not with the joy communicated by this secret testimony to our spirit. Its reality is indicated in Scripture by such expressions as those of the Father and the Son coming unto us, and making their abode with us, Christ manifesting Himself to us, and supping with us, His giving us the hidden manna, and the white stone, denoting the communication to us of the knowledge of an acquittal from guilt, and a new name written, which no man knows except he that receives it.”

“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself, 1 John v. 10. This witnessing of the Spirit to the believer’s spirit, communicating consolation, is never His first work, but is consequent on His other work of renovation. He first gives faith, and then seals. “After that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. He also witnesses with our spirit, graciously shining on His own promises, making them clear, assuring us of their truth, enabling our spirit to embrace them and to discover our interest in them. He witnesses with our spirit in all the blessedness of His gracious fruits, diffusing through the soul love, and joy, and peace. In the first method of His witnessing with our spirit we are passive ; but in the last method there is a concurrence on our part with His testimony. The testimony of the Spirit, then, is attended with the testimony of conscience, and is thus a co-witness with our spirit. It may also be observed, that where this exists, it brings with it a disposition and promptitude for prayer. It is the testimony of the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father ; it disposes the soul to holiness.”

“The important truth here affirmed, that the Holy Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, does not seduce believers from the written word, or expose them to delusions, mistaken for internal revelations, differing from the revelations of Scripture. This internal revelation must be agreeable to Scripture revelation, and is no revelation of a new article of faith unknown to Scripture. It is the revelation of a truth consonant to the word of God, and made to a believer in that blessed book for his comfort. The Spirit testifies to our Sonship by an external revelation in the Scriptures that believers are the sons of God. He concurs with this testimony by illuminating the mind and understanding, and persuading it of the truth of this external revelation. He unites with this testimony by reason of His gracious sanctifying presence in us, and is therefore called the earnest of our inheritance, and God’s seal, marking us as His own.”

Professor John Murray on Romans 8: 16 – “In Romans 8: 16, Paul adds: ‘The Spirit himself bears joint witness to our spirit that we are children of God.’ “Of course, the interpretation could be advanced that this is but another way of stating that which adverted to in verse 15. But there are three considerations against this view: a) The *sunmarturei* points to a joint testimony and therefore to something additional. b) It is a witness to our spirit.” “If it were the same witness as that reflected on in verse 15, it would be difficult to see the point of verse 16. c) A comparison of verses 14 and 16 with verses 23 and 26 would confirm this interpretation.” “For in the latter Paul speaks of the groaning of own spirit and of the Holy Spirit, and the latter are distinct because he introduces the subject with the words *hosutos de kai* and again uses a composite verb with *sun*, namely, *sunantilambanetai*.”

“So apparently what Paul is saying in effect is that there is the witness borne through the Holy Spirit by our own spirits in the ‘Abba, Father’, and there is, in addition, the witness of the Holy Spirit to our spirits.” “In Meyer’s terms, Paul distinguishes between the subjective self-consciousness, ‘I am the child of God’, and the accordant testimony of the Holy Spirit, ‘Thou art the child of God.’” “so in verse 16 there is the witness which the Holy Spirit bears to the spirit of the believer.” “It must be construed therefore as something very direct.” “As in other phases of the operations of the Spirit there is inscrutability of mode.” “It is not something that can be subjected to any further analysis than a witness which is the seal of the Holy Spirit to the authentic character of the witness borne by our own spirits in the tenderness and confidence with which we approach to God and with which we lay hold upon all the provisions and resources of the Father’s grace for the perfecting in us of the promises which reach their consummation in glorification with Christ.”

“In concluding, it may not be superfluous to mention that the Spirit work in evoking filial affection and confidence, and in the direct witness to the Sonship of believers, must never be divorced from the other activities of the Spirit in the sanctification of believers.” “The Spirit opens their understanding to understand the Scriptures.” “He unveils to them more and more of the glory of Christ.” “He sheds abroad in their hearts the love of God.” “He stirs up other holy affections and adorns them with the fruit of the Spirit.” “They thus increasingly approve the things that are excellent and prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” “They grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” “They add to faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.” (2nd Peter 1: 5-7) “Reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, they are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.” “This progressive conformity to the image of God’s Son is authentic witness to the recognition that their alignments are not with the world that lies in the wicked one but with the kingdom which is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

3. The Testimony of the Spirit that we are heirs of God if we suffer with Christ

Romans 8: 16 and 17 – “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are 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.” See also 2nd Timothy 1: 6-9

4. The Importance of self-examination in relation to coming to have assurance.

2nd Corinthians 12: 19 – 13: 6 – “Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification. For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.” “This will be the third time I am coming to you. **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD SHALL BE ESTABLISHED.**” I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare--since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you. Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified. But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.”