

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 18.-*Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation.*

II. This certainty is not a bare conjecturall and probable perswasion, grounded upon a fallible hope¹; but, an infallible assurance of faith, founded, upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation², the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made³, the testimony of the Spirit of Adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God⁴: which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption⁵.

Question 1.—*Is this certainty, a bare conjecture, and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope?*

Answer.—No. It is an infallible assurance of faith, Heb. 6:11,17-19. Thus, the Papists and Arminians err, maintaining that the assurance of salvation is only conjectural, or at the most, only probable, which has for its foundation a failing and fading faith. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because assurance is from the testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our spirits, that we are the children of God, Rom. 8:15,16. Full assurance, therefore—which is the fullness of hope resting on the fullness of faith—is a state of mind which it is the office of the Holy Ghost to induce in our minds in connection with the evidence of our gracious character above stated, 1 John 3:19-22. In whatever way he works in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure, Phil. 2:13, or sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, Rom. 5:5, or begets us again to a lively hope, 1 Pet. 1:3, in that way he gives origin to the grace of full assurance—not as a blind and fortuitous feeling, but as a legitimate and undoubting conclusion from appropriate evidence, Isa. 56:5. 2.) Because this assurance is founded on the promises of God, who cannot lie, Isa. 46:10; John 3:36. 3.) Because believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of their inheritance; but he that receives the earnest not only has right to possession, but knows assuredly, that he has that right, and shall be put in the actual possession thereof, Eph. 1:13,14; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:21,22. 4.) Because God willing more abundantly, to show unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his council, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, Heb. 6:17,18.

Question 2.—*Is the infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, and upon the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made?*

Answer.—Yes. Heb. 6:17,18; 2 Pet. 1:4,5,10,11; 1 John 2:3; 3:14; 2 Cor. 1:12. So then, the Antinomians err, maintaining that none ought or can gather any comfort or assurance of salvation from his own works of holiness; but that a believer ought to lean

¹Heb. 6:11,19.

²Heb. 6:17,18.

³2 Pet. 1:4,5,10,11; 1 John 2:3; 3:14; 2 Cor. 1:12.

⁴Rom. 8:15,16.

⁵Eph. 1:13,14; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:21,22.

and rest upon the alone testimony of the Spirit, without any marks or signs; from which testimony he may, they say, be fully assured of the remission of his sins, and of his own salvation, *cf.* Eph. 1:11-14. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) From the examples of the saints, who gathered their comforts from the fruits of faith, and works of holiness, as David did, Ps. 119:6; and as Paul did, 2 Cor. 1:12. 2.) From the reckoning up of marks, which are held out in Scripture, by which believers may be known from unbelievers, as mutual love, John 13:35; observing and keeping his commandments, 1 John 2:3; doing of righteousness, 1 John 3:14; and loving the brethren. 3.) Because unless faith can be proven by marks, true faith cannot be discerned from presumption, neither can assurance, rightly founded, be discerned from delusion of Satan, 1 John 4:2. 4.) Because reason requires, that from the knowledge of the effect, we should come to the knowledge of the cause, according to Matt. 7:16. 5.) Because marks of grace have so much clearness in themselves, that they will even beget in others a judgment according to charity, concerning the election of others, therefore much more in these same very persons, who are able to discern, and know better their own hearts, 1 Thess. 1:3,4.