

Sunday School

Second London Baptist Confession of Faith Chapter 18: Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

III. The Struggle for Assurance (P 3)

3. This infallible assurance is not such an essential part of faith *that it is always fully experienced alongside faith*, but true believers may wait a long time and struggle with many difficulties before obtaining it.⁹ Yet with the enabling of the Spirit to know the things freely given to them by God, they may attain this assurance using ordinary means appropriately without any extraordinary revelation.¹⁰ Therefore, it is the duty of all to be as diligent as possible to make their calling and election sure. In this way their hearts 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. These effects are the natural fruits of this assurance.¹¹ Thus, it does not at all encourage believers to be negligent.¹²

⁹Isaiah 50:10; Psalms 88; 77:1–12. ¹⁰1 John 4:13; Hebrews 6:11, 12. ¹¹Romans 5:1, 2, 5; 14:17; Psalms 119:32. ¹²Romans 6:1, 2; Titus 2:11, 12, 14.

- A. Not of the essence of faith?

- B. Assurance is possible by the Holy Spirit
 - 1. The Spirit may empower us to know the things freely given to us by God
1 Jn 4:13
 - 2. The right use of means - W/O extraordinary revelation
 - 3. It is our duty to make our calling and election sure
Heb. 6:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:10
 - 4. For the enlargement of peace and joy in the Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience
Psa. 119:32; Rom. 5:1-11
 - 5. The proper fruit of assurance is obedience, not negligence
Titus 2:11-14

Thomas Brooks, “Being in a state of grace will yield a man heaven hereafter, but the seeing of himself in this state will yield him both a heaven here and a heaven hereafter.”

IV. The Fluctuations of Assurance (P 4)

4. True believers may in various ways have the assurance of their salvation shaken, decreased, or temporarily lost. This may happen because they neglect to preserve it¹³ or fall into some specific sin that wounds their conscience and grieves the Spirit.¹⁴ It may happen through some unexpected or forceful temptation¹⁵ or when God withdraws the light of his face and allows even those who fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light.¹⁶ Yet they are never completely lacking the seed of God,¹⁷ the life of faith,¹⁸ love of Christ and the brethren, sincerity of heart, or conscience concerning their duty. Out of



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these graces, through the work of the Spirit, this assurance may at the proper time be revived.¹⁹ In the meantime, they are kept from utter despair through them.²⁰

¹³Song of Solomon 5:2, 3, 6. ¹⁴Psalms 51:8, 12, 14. ¹⁵Psalms 116:11; 77:7, 8; 31:22; ¹⁶Psalms 30:7. ¹⁷1 John 3:9. ¹⁸Luke 22:32. ¹⁹Psalms 42:5, 11. ²⁰Lamentations 3:26–31.

- A. Shaken, decreased, temporarily lost
 - 1. Neglect to preserve it
 - 2. Fall into a specific sin that wounds their conscience or grieves the Spirit
Psa. 51:8, 12, 14; Eph. 4:30
 - 3. Unexpected or forceful temptation
Lk. 22:32
 - 4. When God withdraws the light of His face and allows those who fear Him to walk in darkness and have no light.
Mic. 7:7-9

- B. Yet never so completely lacking
 - 1. The seed of God – 1 Jn. 3:9
 - 2. The life of faith – Lk.22:32
 - 3. love of Christ and the brethren -
 - 4. Sincerity of heart or conscience concerning their duty

- C. Out of these graces, the Spirit may revive assurance

- D. In the meantime, they are kept from utter despair
Lam. 3:26-31

