

Baptist Confession of Faith

Chapter 18

The Assurance of Grace and Salvation.

- 1 I. Assurance is possible
 - 2 II. Assurance is infallible
 - 3 III. Assurance is attainable
 - 4 IV. Assurance is variable
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1 I. Assurance is possible

{The danger of this possibility}

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| 1. Although temporary Believers, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes, and carnal presumptions, of being in the favour of God, and state of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish; |
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Job 8:13-14

So [are] the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish:

Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust [shall be] a spider's web.

Matthew 7:22-23

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

{The fact of this possibility}

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| yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good Conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured (b) that they are in the state of Grace |
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1 John 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

1 John 3:14,18-19,21,24

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not [his] brother abideth in death. ..

18-19.

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. ..

21

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, [then] have we confidence toward God. ..

24

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

1 John 5:13

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

and may rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God which hope shall never make them (c) ashamed.

Romans 5:2,5

*By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoyce in hope of the glory of God. ..
And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

2 II. Assurance is infallible

{A. The fact of its infallibility}

1. Stated negatively

This certainty is not a bare conjectural, and probable persuasion, grounded upon (d) a fallible hope

2. Stated positively

but an infallible assurance of faith founded on the Blood and Righteousness of Christ (e)

Hebrews 6:11,19

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: ..

Which [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

Hebrews 6:17-18

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed [it] by an oath:

That by two immutable things, in which [it was] impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

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{B The roots of its infallibility}

1. The promises of the gospel
2. The marks of grace
3. The testimony of the Spirit

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| 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; |
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2 Peter 1:4-5,10-11

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ..

10-11

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:15-16

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

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C. The fruits of its infallibility

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| and as a fruit thereof keeping the heart both (h) humble and holy. |
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1 John 3:1-3

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

3 III. Assurance is attainable

{A. The difficulty of attaining assurance}

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;

Isaiah 50:10

Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

Read also Psalm 88: 1-18

Psalm 77: 1-12

{B. The provision for attaining assurance}

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:

Hebrews 6:11-12

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

{C. The duty of attaining assurance}

and therefore it is the duty of every one, to give all diligence to make their 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 chearfulness in the

duties of obedience, the proper (l) fruits of this Assurance; so far is it (m) from inclining men to looseness.

Romans 6:1-2

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Titus 2:11-12,14

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; ..

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

4 IV. Assurance is variable

{A. The fact of this variation}

True Believers may have the assurance of their Salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as (n) by negligence in preserving of it,

Song of Songs 5:2-3,6

I sleep, but my heart waketh: [it is] the voice of my beloved that knocketh, [saying], Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, [and] my locks with the drops of the night.

I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? ..

I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, [and] was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

{B. The reasons for this variation}

by (o) falling into some special Sin, which woundeth the Conscience, and grieveth the Spirit, by some sudden or (p) vehement temptation, by Gods withdrawing the (q) light of his countenance and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light;

Psalm 51:8,12,14

Make me to hear joy and gladness; [that] the bones [which] thou hast broken may rejoice. ..

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me [with thy] free spirit. ..

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: [and] my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

Psalm 77:7-8

Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?

Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth [his] promise fail for evermore?

Psalm 31:22

For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

Psalm 30:7

LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, [and] I was troubled.

{C. The limits of this variation}

yet are they never destitute of the (r) seed of God, and Life (s) of Faith, that Love of Christ, and the brethren, that sincerity of Heart, and Conscience of duty, out of which by the operation of the Spirit, this Assurance may in due time be (t) revived: and by the which in the mean time they are (u) preserved from utter despair.

1 John 3:9

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Luke 22:32

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Psalms 42:5,11

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and [why] art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him [for] the help of his countenance. ..

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, [who is] the health of my countenance, and my God.

Lamentations 3:26-31

[It is] good that [a man] should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

[It is] good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne [it] upon him.

He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. He giveth [his] cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.

For the Lord will not cast off for ever: