

## CONFESSION OF FAITH.

### CHAPTER 14.-Of Saving Faith.

III. This Faith is different in degrees, weak, or strong<sup>1</sup>; may be often and many waies assailed, and weakned, but gets the victory<sup>2</sup>; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ<sup>3</sup>, who is both the Author and finisher of our faith<sup>4</sup>.

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Question 1.—*Does this faith, although always as to essence the same, often different in degrees in different persons, and in the same person at different times?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Heb. 5:13, 14; Rom. 4:19, 20. That there are degrees in faith,—is a doctrine which some deny, but a doctrine which Scripture, in many places, most clearly establishes, Rom. 14:21. Our Lord charges His disciples in general, and at another time Peter particularly, Matt. 6:30; 14:31, as having little faith: they had faith; but, unlike to Abraham's, it was deficient in strength, Matt. 8:26. Our Lord, too, speaks of the comparatively strong faith of the centurion, Matt. 8:10. He had not found so great faith in Israel, Luke 7:9. The Apostles, also, addressing Jesus, pray, "Lord, increase our faith," Luke 17:5. In the same manner, the Apostle Paul speaks of the "measure of faith," Rom. 12:3, importing that believers were endowed with different degrees of this gift, Mark 9:23, 24.

Question 2.—*Does this faith, though exposed to many enemies, and often and in many ways assailed and weakened, through divine grace, always in the end gain the victory?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Luke 22:31, 32; Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:4, 5. We see the examples of many of the saints who fell into grievous sin and were reclaimed, Luke 22:32. David, overcome by his concupiscence falls into the two-fold sin of adultery and murder, 2 Sam. 11:2-4. But the rebuke of the prophet Nathan brings recognition and repentance, Ps. 51:11, 12. Solomon fell into many and grievous sins, and the testimony of Scripture is to this effect, 1 Kings 11:4, 6. However, after his death, when reference is made to Rehoboam, his faith is commended, which thing the Holy Ghost would not have done had Solomon departed totally and finally from the faith, 2 Chron. 11:17. Likewise, Peter fell grievously when he denied that he had ever known Christ, Matt. 26:72. But, when the cock crew, he was reminded—he returned to himself, Matt. 26:75, and wept bitterly for his sinful departure, Luke 22:62. The faith of God's elect, though put to great trial shall never depart totally or finally, Deut. 31:8; Heb. 13:5; Isa. 55:3; 59:21; Hos. 2:19. God, who is faithful, has promised his protection to the believer and the grace of perseverance, 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:5.

Question 3.—*Does this faith in many grow up to the measure of a full assurance through Christ?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Col. 2:2. It is the duty and privilege of the Christian to seek assurance, 2 Tim. 2:19. It is based on the doctrine of election that teaches that God will keep his own,

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. 5:13, 14; Rom. 4:19, 20; Matt. 6:30; 8:10.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 22:31, 32; Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:4, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. 6:11, 12; 10:22; Col. 2:2.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. 12:2.

1 Pet. 1:5. “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,” 2 Pet. 1:10, 11. The doctrine of election becomes the most comforting of doctrines when this is recognized, Ps. 37:24. We are exhorted to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, Heb. 10:22. Elsewhere, we are exhorted to show the same diligence pressing for full assurance of hope to the end, Heb. 6:11, 12. The assurance of faith and the assurance of hope differ as to their ends—faith accredits the divine testimony, and applies the truth directly and persistently to the soul, Heb. 11:1, 4-10. It is the nature and office of faith to make personal appropriation, Hab. 2:4. In contrast, hope fastens on the promise, and lays hold of the eternal life set forth therein, Heb. 6:18. Thus, hope and the assurance of hope follow in order of nature and the process of influence, faith, and the assurance of faith, Col. 1:23. Therefore, the true way to gain assurance of hope is to cultivate faith, growing into assurance, Rom. 8:24.

The ground of assurance, if it is rooted in faith, it stands upon God’s faithfulness, not ours, Lam. 3:23. The Bible teaches that assurance should be sought, John 10:27-30; Rom. 5:2-5; 8:15, 16, 35-39; 2 Cor. 13:5; Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30; Phil. 1:6; Heb. 6:11, 17-19. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that this assurance is only to be found in and through Christ, who is the author and finisher of our faith, Heb. 12:2.