

Emmaus Essentials
The London Baptist Confession of 1689
Chapter 18 - Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation
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Chapter Outline

Taken from ST 535 Baptist Symbolics Chapter Outlines by Dr. Renihan

Introduction

I. Paragraph 1 - The Possibility of Assurance

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; 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 that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

(Job 8:13, 14; Matthew 7:22, 23; 1 John 2:3; 1 John 3:14, 18, 19, 21, 24; 1 John 5:13; Romans 5:2, 5)

- A. A. The reality of delusion—false assurance
 - 1. Deception - Temporary believers (WSF uses “hypocrites”)
 - a) Unregenerate men with false hopes
 - (1) Hope is the essential concept in the NT dealing with the issue of assurance
 - 2. Perishing
 - a) Their hope perishes because they perish
- B. True believers may enjoy assurance
 - 1. Conditions:
 - a) True faith in Jesus Christ (objective)
 - (1) Are you trusting in Christ now?
 - b) Sincere love to him
 - (1) *Sincere* love does not mean *perfect* love
 - c) Walking in good conscience before Him
 - 2. They may enjoy assurance
 - 3. They may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God
- C. Implication: true believers may lack assurance.

“On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” (Matthew 7:22-23, ESV)

“And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.” (1 John 2:3, ESV)

“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.” (1 John 3:14, ESV)

“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:18, ESV)

“By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;” (1 John 3:19, ESV)

“Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;” (1 John 3:21, ESV)

“Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.” (1 John 3:24, ESV)

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:13, ESV)

“Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Romans 5:2, ESV)

“and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:5, ESV)

II. Paragraph 2 - The Foundation of Assurance

This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel; and also upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit unto which promises are made, and on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God; and, as a fruit thereof, keeping the heart both humble and holy. (Hebrews 6:11, 19; Hebrews 6:17, 18; 2 Peter 1:4, 5, 10, 11; Romans 8:15, 16; 1 John 3:1-3)

A. Opening thoughts

1. “When we speak of the grounds of assurance we are thinking of the ways in which a believer comes to entertain this assurance not of the grounds on which his salvation rests...” (John Murray)
2. We are not talking about the basis of our salvation but the basis upon which we enjoy assurance.
3. The grounds of salvation are as secure for the person who does not have assurance as for the person who does...” (John Murray)

B. Assurance as Infallible

1. “This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope..”
 - a) Hope in scripture is a hope that God is faithful and will do what he has promised to do...
2. Infallible assurance?
 - a) Based upon the ground of assurance

C. The Primary Objective Ground of Assurance (the divine truth of the promise of salvation - the work of Christ)

1. This “infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel”
 - a) The first and most basic grounds of assurance is external
 - (1) A conscious understanding of the nature of the work of Christ
 - (2) Assurance is Christ-centered

D. The First Secondary Subjective Ground: The inward evidence of Grace

1. Obedience

E. The Second Secondary Subjective Ground: The Witness of the Holy Spirit

1. The Spirit

“And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end,” (Hebrews 6:11, ESV)

“We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain,” (Hebrews 6:19, ESV)

“So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in

which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us." (Hebrews 6:17-18, ESV)

"...by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire." (2 Peter 1:4, ESV)

"For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge... Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:5,10-11, ESV)

"For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father! The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God..." (Romans 8:15-16, ESV)

"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." (1 John 3:1-3, ESV)

III. Paragraph 3 - The Cultivation of 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 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, 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 fruits of this assurance; -so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

(Isaiah 50:10; Psalms 88; Psalms 77:1-12; 1 John 4:13; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Romans 5:1, 2, 5; Romans 14:17; Psalms 119:32; Romans 6:1,2; Titus 2:11, 12, 14)

- A. Believers may wait for infallible assurance
- B. Believers may attain assurance
 - 1. Without extraordinary revelation
 - 2. By the right use of means
- C. It is a believer's duty to seek assurance
- D. Assurance brings blessed fruit:
 - 1. Enlarged peace and joy in the Spirit
 - 2. Love and thankfulness to God
 - 3. Strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience
- E. True assurance never leads to sin

"Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God." (Isaiah 50:10, ESV)

"O Lord, God of my salvation; I cry out day and night before you. Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry! For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am a man who has no strength, like one set loose among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand. You have put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your

waves. Selah You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a horror to them. I am shut in so that I cannot escape; my eye grows dim through sorrow. Every day I call upon you, O Lord; I spread out my hands to you. Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the departed rise up to praise you? Selah Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in Abaddon? Are your wonders known in the darkness, or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? But I, O Lord, cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you. O Lord, why do you cast my soul away? Why do you hide your face from me? Afflicted and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am helpless. Your wrath has swept over me; your dreadful assaults destroy me. They surround me like a flood all day long; they close in on me together. You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me; my companions have become darkness." (Psalm 88, ESV)

"I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted. When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints. Selah You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I consider the days of old, the years long ago. I said, "Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in my heart." Then my spirit made a diligent search: "Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable? Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" Selah Then I said, "I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High." I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds." (Psalm 77:1-12, ESV)

"By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit." (1 John 4:13, ESV)

"And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end," (Hebrews 6:11, ESV)

"so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Hebrews 6:12, ESV)

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God... and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." (Romans 5:1-2,5, ESV)

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14:17, ESV)

"I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!" (Psalm 119:32, ESV)

"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" (Romans 6:1-2, ESV)

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age... who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." (Titus 2:11-12, 14, ESV)

IV. Paragraph 4 - The Renewal of Assurance

True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light, yet are they never destitute of the seed of God and life 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 revived, and by the which, in the meantime, they are preserved from utter despair.

(Song of Solomon 5:2, 3, 6; Psalms 51:8, 12, 14; Psalms 116:11; Psalms 77:7, 8; Psalms 31:22; Psalms 30:7; 1 John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Psalms 42:5, 11; Lamentations 3:26-31)

- A. True believers may lose the enjoyment of the assurance of salvation by a variety of means
 1. By Negligence
 2. By falling into sin
 3. By temptation (vehement)
 4. By divine act
- B. But, they never lose their salvation when they lose the enjoyment of their assurance. They always possess:
 1. The seed of God
 2. The Life of faith
 3. The Love of Christ
 4. Love of the brethren
 5. Sincerity of heart
 6. Conscience of duty
- C. These may be the means of:
 1. Restoring the enjoyment of assurance
 2. Preventing utter despair

"I slept, but my heart was awake. A sound! My beloved is knocking. "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one, for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night." (Song of Solomon 5:2, ESV)

"I had put off my garment; how could I put it on? I had bathed my feet; how could I soil them?" (Song of Solomon 5:3, ESV)

"I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone. My soul failed me when he spoke. I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer." (Song of Solomon 5:6, ESV)

"Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice." (Psalm 51:8, ESV)

"Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit." (Psalm 51:12, ESV)

"Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness." (Psalm 51:14, ESV)

"I said in my alarm, "All mankind are liars." (Psalm 116:11, ESV)

"Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable?" (Psalm 77:7, ESV)

"Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time?" (Psalm 77:8, ESV)

"I had said in my alarm, "I am cut off from your sight." But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help." (Psalm 31:22, ESV)

“By your favor, O Lord, you made my mountain stand strong; you hid your face; I was dismayed.” (Psalm 30:7, ESV)

“No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.” (1 John 3:9, ESV)

“but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:32, ESV)

“Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation” (Psalm 42:5, ESV)

“Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.” (Psalm 42:11, ESV)

“It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid on him; let him put his mouth in the dust— there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults. For the Lord will not cast off forever,” (Lamentations 3:26–31, ESV)

Conclusion