

3. Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

Preservation – God holds on to believers (Peter restored after falling)

Perseverance – believers continue in faith, love, and holiness (Peter repents and follows)

Assurance – believer's confidence of his salvation (Peter – make your calling and election sure)

Apostasy – abandonment of the faith by “professed” believers (King Saul? and Judas)

Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13)

Displeasure and Discipline of God

**Eph. 4:30** - And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

**1 Cor. 11:32** - But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

#### **CHAP. XVIII. - Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation.**

2. ... assurance of faith founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God, which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.

3. ... 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 Ghost, 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.

**2 Peter 1:10** - Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

4. 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 utterly destitute of that 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 be the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.

William Cowper, presumed to be crazy and often greatly depressed about his life. These words were found penned on the wall of his room in an asylum.

*Could we with ink the oceans fill, and were the skies of parchment made;  
Were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above, would drain the oceans dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky.*

**Westminster Confession of Faith – Chapters 16-18**  
**www.pcaac.org (left side “confession of faith”)**

**What is the relationship between law and grace?**

**CHAP. XVI. - Of Good Works.**

2. *These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.*

3. *Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they may be enabled thereunto, beside the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will, and to do, of His good pleasure: yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.*

**John 15:4-6** - Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me...

6. *Notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in Him...*

**1 Peter 2:5** - you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

7. *Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands; and of good use both to themselves and others: yet, because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word; nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God...*

**What makes a work “good”?**

**Hebrews 11:6** - And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

**CHAP. XVII. - Of the Perseverance of the Saints.**

1. *They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.*

**Philip. 1:6** - And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.