

### III. Faith

Chapter 14 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* is entitled "Of Saving Faith." This chapter is worthy of quotation:

I. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word, by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.

II. By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

III. This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and in many ways assailed, and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance, through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.

Some definitions by outstanding theologians are also helpful:

J. Oliver Buswell, Jr. asserts: "The scriptural meaning of faith must be studied from three different points of view: (1) faith as an act of believing, (2) faith as the substance of what we believe, (3) faith as faithfulness . . . . To believe the truth about Christ, or to believe in Him, is to take the position which such belief normally calls for, viz., acceptance of Him and committal of one's self to Him."

William G. T. Shedd states: "Faith is assent to testimony and also trust in the person who gives the testimony. Trusting faith is the special exercise of the soul by which . . . Christ's atonement for sin is laid hold of and made personal. Evangelical faith is that act of both the understanding and the will that unites the soul to Christ."

Lois Berkhof writes: "Saving faith is certain conviction, wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, as to the truth of the gospel, and a hearty reliance (trust) on the promises of God in Christ."

#### A. Aspects of Genuine Faith

##### 1. The Nature of Faith

In the *American College Dictionary* "faith" is defined as follows:

faith, n. 1. confidence or trust in a person or thing. 2. belief which is not based on proof. 3. belief in the doctrines or teachings of religion. 4. the doctrines which are or should be believed. 5. a system of religious belief: the Christian faith, the Jewish faith. 6. the obligation of loyalty or fidelity (to a person, promise, engagement,