

## Canons of Dort–5<sup>th</sup> Head: 1-3 – Man Needs Preservation

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: After all the hardships of pregnancy no mother puts her child in his crib and say: “You’re on your own; I need to get some rest!” Parents know that that child will only survive for a short time without assistance. How much more you heavenly Father! He knows that after your rebirth you could not survive a moment in your new life without his constant help – his constant preservation. So he preserves his dear children. This is a doctrine that brings much comfort to the saints of God. You will hear about this today.

Let us first define preservation: Preservation is the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer such that the work of grace that was begun in the heart at regeneration 重生 is continued and brought to full completion in our glorification.

Our headings are:

**The Believer’s Sins Remain After Conversion**

**The Believer’s Response to his Sins**

**The Believer is Reinforced to Fight Sin**

Our goals are: **That seeing your need to be preserved, and seeing God’s gift of preservation, you will receive the Lord’s preservation with joy and respond in proper worship.**

### **The Believer Sins Remain even after Conversion**

**Article 1: The Regenerate Not Entirely Free from Sin** -Those people whom God calls into fellowship with God’s Son Jesus Christ our Lord according to the divine purpose and regenerates by the Holy Spirit, God also wholly sets free from the dominion and slavery of sin, **though not wholly from the flesh and body of sin as long as they are in this life.**

按神旨意蒙召与他的儿子，我们的主耶稣基督有相交，并蒙圣灵重生的人，他也从今世罪恶的统治与奴役中拯救出来，虽然当他们还在世上的时候，不能使他们完全脱离罪身和肉体的软弱。

**1. Even though the Christian is miraculously saved by God, sin yet remains in you.** You sin in thought, words and actions. You never stop sinning even though you are in God’s kingdom. So you need help from God to overcome sin. James said that we all stumble. (James 3:2). Hear what Apostles Paul and John said to the church.

Romans 7: 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I **see another law in my members**, warring against the law of my mind, and **bringing me into captivity to the law of sin** which is in my members.

1John 1:8 **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves**, and the truth is not in us.

This is why you pray “lead us not into temptation” and “forgive us our debts.” You know your proclivity to sin and your consequent need for forgiveness.

## **2. Knowing your weakness even after conversion, for you are only perfect in glory, God promised to preserve you.**

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us 唯有基督在我们还作罪人的时候为我们死 9 **Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath** through Him.

John 6:39 "**This is the will of the Father** who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

Because he saved you, he will complete that work. Look again:

1Corinthians 1:8 who will also confirm you to the end, **that you may be blameless in the day** of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord will always complete what he started. **He is willing and able to do so.** He has promised to do so.

## **3. The Arminian, on the other hand, believes that persevering is not a fruit of election (or a gift of God), but perseverance is a condition that God placed on man.** In other words, to be preserved for eternity, they believe God demands you must do it; you must fix the sin that remains in your life. But is this what you see in this text?

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not **with Him also freely give us all things**? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession 祈求 for us. 35 **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 是患难吗? 是困苦吗? 是法律吗? 是饥饿吗? 是赤身露体吗? 是危险吗? 是刀剑吗?

**The preserving (used interchangeably with perseverance) of believers is the work of God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.** After all, who can resist and triumph over world, the flesh, and the Devil by himself? Can man? Certainly not!

### **The Believer's Response to his Sins**

**Article 2: The Believer's Reaction to Sins of Weakness** - Hence daily sins of weakness arise, and blemishes cling to even the best works of saints, giving them continual cause to **humble themselves** before God, to **flee for refuge** to Christ crucified, to **put the flesh to death** more and more by the Spirit of supplication and by **holy exercises of godliness**, and to strain toward the goal of perfection, until they are freed from this body of death and reign with the Lamb of God in heaven.

因此就生出每天列出的软弱之罪, 从此在圣洁敬虔的善行上附带着污点, 要使他们时常在神面前谦卑, 并飞到耶稣十字架的基督那里避难, 用所信的心以及圣洁敬虔的操练多多对付肉体, 并向着完全的目标努力前进, 直到最终脱离肉身的死亡, 他们就在天上与神的羔羊一同作王。

## **1. While sin daily clings to you, and while you are unable by yourself to destroy sin, you make use of the means God has provided to be preserved.**

### **2. What are those means?**

**a. You must be humble before your Father in heaven.** All praise belongs to God for your salvation. Sin makes you think much of yourself. But whatever goes down (in humility) will come up (is growth). The arrogant are cut down.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

**b. You must flee to God for refuge** on the basis of the work of God the Son, Jesus Christ. This pictures protection. The Christian daily runs to God for solace 安慰. Your enemies, the Devil, the world, and your flesh, pose mortal dangers.

**Psalm 40:2** He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps.

**c. You must put to death your sin.** You do this with the help of God's Holy Spirit. You pray daily for this help. And you practice obedience, replacing sin with service. Instead of wasting time on the internet, write an encouraging e-mail to a visitor to church. Say a prayer for the persecuted or the poor. Write a missionary. This is how to kill lusts!

**In all of these things, you acknowledge that you do not have the wherewithal to fix the problem of the remnants of sin your life.**

**3. Arminians believe that while God does give these gifts to his children,** they can stop the salvation process by refusing to use these gifts. In other words, though they were regenerated by God (and given eternal life), if they refuse to use these gifts to persevere, they could lose that eternal life. Arminians are robbers of God; they are stealing his honor. **They believe that there is no salvation without human intervention 干预, so God is stuck without human cooperation.**

But suppose Emily is walking through a dark room with her father, we know she is safe, but the Arminian says she is safe as long as she holds on to her father's hand, but the proper view is that she is safe **because her father is holding her hand.**

### **The Believer is Reinforced to fight Sin**

**Article 3: God's Preservation of the Converted** - Because of these remnants of sin dwelling in them and also because of the temptations of the world and Satan, those who have been converted could not remain standing in this grace if left to their own resources. But God is faithful, mercifully strengthening them in the grace once conferred on them and powerfully preserving them in it to the end.

由于住在罪而残余的罪，以及罪恶与世界的引诱，那些悔改归主的人，

如果要靠自己的力量，就不能在恩典的境界中恒忍。但是神是言的，祂赐恩给他们，以恩慈坚固他们，并以大能保守他们，直到末了。

**1. There is no doubt the Devil, the world, and your flesh hate you, so you need reinforcements 增援.**

**John 15:18** "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, **therefore the world hates you.**

**Revelation 12:9** So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the **Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world;** he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ

have come, for the accuser of our brethren, **who accused them** before our God **day and night**, has been cast down.

“Live and let live” must not be the attitude of the Christian. You have a really dangerous enemy. Yes, it is true that sometimes you might not feel as if the world hates you, but you must not live on the basis of feelings. **You have to live on the basis of revealed truth.** Indeed, the pretense of the world is a trap that the Devil constantly uses to fool people into thinking that all is well with their soul. This was why the Apostle John warned his readers:

**1John 2:15** Do **not love the world or the things in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

No wise one embraces the one who hates him!

## **2. And this is a war with many battles throughout your life.**

**1Peter 5:8** Be sober, be vigilant 谨守、警醒 because your adversary the devil walks about **like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour** 寻找可以吞吃的人. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

The enemy is not some kind of weak and sickly enemy that you can ignore or play games with!

**Romans 12:2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

A transformation does not take place with gentle work! This is revolutionary work.

**Philippians 3:12** Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; **but I press on**, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

You are to apply force...press on...stroll on...

## **3. But you have the help of the Lord for this battle.**

a. He assures you that he will preserve you. Jesus taught this in the parable of the Good Shepherd.

**John 10:28** "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; **neither shall anyone snatch** 夺去 **them out of My hand.** 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; **and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.**

**Romans 11:7** What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; **but the elect have obtained it,** and the rest were blinded.

**Philippians 1:6** being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you **will complete it until the day** of Jesus Christ;

**Psalm 138:7** Though I walk in the midst of trouble, **You will revive me**; You will stretch out Your hand Against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me. 8 The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever...

b. He prays for you.

Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 "**But I have prayed for you**, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

**4. That Arminian puts man at the center of this struggle, but the Bible clearly puts God at the center.**

Knowing yourself, who would you prefer to be at the center, you or God?

**Conclusion:**

Sin remains in the believer. Instead of trying to fight off sin by yourself, you must run to God in humility and plead for help. God then works through his Word and Spirit to reinforce you with strength so you persevere and are preserved!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. Stand in awe敬畏 of God when you see his work from the beginning to the end of your salvation.** He saved you and keeps you in the hollow of his hand. This will keep you humble.

**2. The Lord wants you to make use of the means he has ordained to preserve you.** If you are not teaching this word to your children, you are letting them rot! They need to be sealed with truth!

**3. Let your mouth be filled with his praise.** Psalm 40:2 *He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps. 3 He has put a new song in my mouth—Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the LORD.*

Finally, if you are not a Christian, know that God preserves his people but punishes those who are not his in the eternal fires of hell. May this urge you to run to him and plead for mercy, on account of Christ, so that you can be saved from eternal punishment.