

Canons of Dort–5th Head: 13-15 – Actions of Assured Christians

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: Prime Minister Harper recently said to President Putin of Russia: “I guess I’ll shake your hand but I have only one thing to say to you: you need to get out of Ukraine.” Prime Minister Harper is a man who is assured of his position. He was respectful, but firm. He is a world leader and he acted like it.

Similarly, the Christian man who is assured and understands his assurance, will act like it. You will hear about this today.

Our headings are:

Assured Christians will not want to flirt调侃 with sin

Assured Christians will want to use the means of grace

Assured Christians will love and embrace this doctrine

Our goals are: **That knowing you are saved and secured for eternity through the eternal sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, you will act like you are saved and secure.**

Assured Christians will not want to Flirt with Sin

Article 13: Assurance No Inducement to Carelessness - Neither does the renewed confidence of perseverance **produce immorality or lack of concern for godliness** in those put back on their feet after a lapse, but it produces a **much greater concern to observe carefully** the ways of the Lord which were prepared in advance. They observe these ways in order that by walking in them they may maintain the assurance of their perseverance, lest, by their abuse of God’s goodness, the face of the gracious God (for the godly, looking upon God’s face is sweeter than life, but its withdrawal is more bitter than death) turn away from them again, with the result that they fall into greater anguish of

spirit. 那些从退后而回转，重新得到坚守确据的人，也不至于生出放纵，或不虔，反倒使他们更留心并更渴慕坚守主道，这确实是主已命定，叫行在其中的人可以持守坚忍的凭据，免得有人滥用神慈父般的仁慈，神便收回他的慈容，瞻仰这慈容对敬虔信徒来说，比生命更宝贵；若被收回就比死亡更痛苦，结果他们更陷入良心更愁苦的折磨中。

1. The fact that you are assured of your salvation (or of being restored when you sin) does not encourage you to be immoral or flirt with sin. The fact that you are assured of your salvation makes you, as a Christian, more obedient.

2. But the Arminian disagrees and argues that assurance of salvation encourages you to be immoral and flirt with sins. He thinks that the Christian who falls into sin and is restored will think that he can continue to do what is wrong and be licentious肆无忌惮 in his behavior. (Like the child constantly hitting his brother and saying “I’m sorry,” every time.) But **the Arminian doesn’t understand the powerful work of God** – that when God works in the hearts of sinners **they will submit** to him more and more, and better and better. Christians are not like that sinful child! **If he uses his assurance of restoration as an excuse to sin, he doesn’t understand what salvation is!**

Let me illustrate this. If you were careless and did not tighten the nuts on your car wheel and your wheel almost falls off, are you likely to do it again? Wouldn’t you be even more careful the next time – maybe double-checking to make sure you didn’t make the same mistake again? Or if you shut the car door on your finger...do you usually do it twice? Similarly, the restored child of God,

who understands his salvation, will be even more careful to walk in God's way!

3. Look at it practically using examples from the Bible – a practical one and a instructive one.

Look what David said after his restoration from backsliding!

Psalm 32:3 When I kept silent, **my bones grew old** Through my groaning all the day long.

When he didn't repent, it hurt badly! Can you imagine David doing this again? And look at what he did after he was restored at another time.

Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. 13 **Then I will teach transgressors Your ways** 我就必把你的道指教有过的 And sinners shall be converted to You.

The Apostle Paul understood that the person who was restored leads a better life!

2Corinthians 7:10 For godly **sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation**, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

4. Why would the child of God not flirt with sin if he is assured of salvation?

a. The assured child of God will not flirt with sin because he is afraid of God abandoning him – moving his face away. When God's face is upon you, it is the benediction.

Numbers 6:25 The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;

When God's face is turned from you, it is cold, lonely, and painful... like Jesus on the cross and said: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" This why the Psalmist used this same language as he repented:

Psalm 80:3 Restore us, O God; **Cause Your face to shine**, And we shall be saved!
7 Restore us, O God of hosts; **Cause Your face to shine**, And we shall be saved!
19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; **Cause Your face to shine**, And we shall be saved!

b. The assured child of God will not flirt with sin because he knows the high price Jesus paid for his sins.

Assured Christians will want to use the means of grace

Article 14: God's Use of Means in Perseverance - And as it has pleased God to begin this work of grace in us by the proclamation of the gospel, so God preserves, continues, and completes the divine work by the hearing and reading of the gospel, by meditation on it, by its exhortations, threats, and promises, and also by the use of the sacraments 神既已乐意用福音的传讲, 在我们里面开始了这恩典之工, 他就用听道、读经、默想其中的道, 并借着劝勉、警告与应许, 以及圣礼的运用, 在我们里面保守、继续并完成此工。

1. God does not save a person and then abandons him to fend for himself. He knows a man would not survive a second without his constant help. So he provided the means by which his child is nourished in his soul and be given strength to get up when he falls down. There are 2 ways that he **provided for your soul in the world** – things you must use!

2. The 1st means of grace is the Word of God.

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

a. God gives you what you need to grow in grace and to have the strength to thrive 兴盛.

Doesn't a mother give her baby the right food when he is born? You have probably seen the famous advertisement of the lady who has fallen and she says: "I've fallen, and I can't get up." But every Christian is equipped with what he needs to get up when he falls, and make it all the way to the end of his life. God feeds you with good things. This promise to feed upon God's Word was taught long ago.

Deuteronomy 6:1 "Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, 2 "**that you may fear the LORD** your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

b. You must know all 66 books of the Bible, not only in your heart but in your head also. This means you must study the law, prophets, Psalms, Gospels, and Epistles. Stay away from churches that focus on the NT only. Otherwise your soul will only get part nourishment.

c. Your church must not casually 随随便便 teach the 66 books. It must diligently teach them.

Deuteronomy 6:6 "And these words which I command you **today shall be in your heart.** 7 "You shall teach them **diligently to your children**, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

2Timothy 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

d. In your homes you must daily feast on Christ. Pastor Bowman wrote: "...not just have a few meals. That is not sufficient to grow. You need constant helpings of nutritious words."

Psalms 119:97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

e. Privately meditate on the words of Scripture, like Mary pondered what she heard from the angel in Luke 2:19.

f. Take the encouragements, threats, and the promises seriously. Then you will do what you should. You will not do what you shouldn't. And you will enjoy it when you do what it is right.

3. The 2nd means of grace is the sacraments. The message of the sacraments is the same message as the Word. Both draw your mind back to the cross and Christ satisfying God's anger for you. Whenever you witness a baptism, your mind will draw back to the cross and see the drops of blood flowing down to make you clean. And whenever you eat the bread and drink the wine of the Lord's Supper, you will think of how Jesus satisfied his Father's anger for you and nourishes you with what is good.

Assured Christians Will love and embrace this doctrine

Article 15: Contrasting Reactions to the Teaching of Perseverance - This teaching about the perseverance of true believers and saints, and about their assurance of it—a teaching which God has very richly revealed in the Word for the glory of God's name and for the comfort of the godly and which the Almighty impresses on the hearts of believers—is something which the **flesh does not understand, Satan hates, the world ridicules**, the ignorant and the hypocrites abuse, and the spirits of error attack. The bride of Christ, on the other hand, has always loved this teaching very tenderly and defended it steadfastly as a priceless treasure; and God, against whom no plan can avail and no strength can prevail, will ensure that the church will continue to do this. To this God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. Amen. 此圣徒蒙保守和确据的教义

是属血肉之心所不能理解的，就是神为他名的荣耀，并安慰敬虔之人的心，而在圣经中极其丰富地启示了，又印在信徒的心上。为撒旦所痛恨，为世界所嘲笑，为无知和假冒为善者所妄用，为异端分子所反对；但基督的教会总是最喜爱它，保卫它，以之为无价之宝；而那些胜过一切计谋和权势的神要使它继续此行为，一直到底。愿尊贵、荣耀归给独一的神，圣父、圣子与圣灵，直到永远。阿们。

1. God gave this doctrine of assurance for the comfort of the godly, but

a. Some don't understand assurance and so rob themselves of the benefits of it.

b. The Devil hates assurance, because you become a harder target to make to feel hopeless, depressed, or overwhelmed不堪重负。He is one who is a roaring lion seeking whomever he can devour. (1Peter 5:8) He knows he is losing and will do anything to bring along those he can.

Revelation 12:12 "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! **For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.**"

c. The world mocks assurance because it takes away the human agency and makes God preeminent突出。The world sees god-ness in man. This is why the Europeans spent hundreds of millions of dollars to send equipment to explore a comet彗星 to find out how man came to be! This was why Chairman Mao pushed the Chinese to live in communes in the early 1950's, thinking that life would become perfect – that utopia. They plainly reject the truth of God as revealed in his Word and assume the god-ness of man.

d. Some abuse it. The ignorant Arminian teaches that this doctrine will make man complacent自满。The hypocrites use it as an excuse to live indulgently纵容。

2. So how does this doctrine comfort the godly? The HC Q&A 1, expresses this comfort more clearly that I ever could.

That I am not my own, but belong— body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me whole-heartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him 在生和死两者之中，我的身体、灵魂都不属于我自己。

乃是属于我言的救主耶稣基督，他用宝血完全洗净了我一切的罪恶，并且救我脱离魔鬼一切的控制，他保守我，若非天父允许，我的头发一根也不能掉下；他又叫万事互相效力，使我得救。因为我属基督，他借着圣灵使我确实知道有永生，也使我从此以后甘心乐意为他而活。

3. Pray for assurance into the recesses of your soul.

1Peter 5:10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

The greater your assurance of faith, the more effective you will be for the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

Assured Christians who were saved by Christ will not want to flirt with sin, but they will want to use the means of grace to strengthen their assurance. Assured Christians will love this doctrine and embrace it so they can be more effective for Christ.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Doesn't Christ assurance of your eternal salvation **make you love God more?** So show it.
2. Knowing that God rescues you when you fall into sin – and again, only because of Christ's suffering, **doesn't that make you stop flirting with trouble?** Don't burn your hand on the stove a 2nd time.
3. Since God assures you of his salvation by using the means of grace, **do you cherish the sacraments?** Do you ignore them for yourself or your children?

Finally, if you are not a Christian, how hopeless you are! But hope is a gift of God...a gift that he offers to anyone who will call on him and ask him for it. It is a free gift to you, but it didn't come free. It came through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross who fully paid for it.