



Review: Eph 2:8; Inconsistencies of Hyper-Calvinism: “Gift of Faith,” “Irresistible Grace” & “Perseverance” but No Assurance & No Service; Who Does One Marry?

28. However, this presents its own set of problems. First of all, when a person expresses personal faith in Christ how is he to know whether or not his faith was “irresistible” or “temporary”?
29. If “irresistible” then he is saved. But if “temporary” his “faith” was nothing more than energy of the flesh and he not only remains lost in his sins but he is reprobate with no hope of salvation. Surely such an individual would like some clarification in order to acquire either assurance of his salvation or confirmation of his condemnation.
30. The answer provided by hyper-Calvinism is very complicated and quite involved but in the end it does not provide the individual with any assurance. It is all guesswork based on assumptions arrived at by “human reasoning” not “biblical revelation.”
31. The hyper-Calvinists assert that if a person is truly among the elect then he *will* be saved. He will *know* he is saved by the fact that he not only produces the “fruit of the Holy Spirit” but that he will “persevere” in such production until physical death.
32. Conclusion: those who “persevere” are those who decide they are saved on or about the day they die. Once a person produces “works of the flesh,” such as those listed in Galatians 5:19-21, he may conclude he has not persevered and is predestined for the lake of fire.
33. Although the hyper-Calvinist insists that salvation is through “faith alone in Christ alone” this phrase does not mean the same to him as it does to one who subscribes to unlimited atonement.
34. Faith alone in Christ alone for the proponent of limited atonement does not stress human free will but rather “irresistible grace.” Only those who are the elect have this provision and their salvation is only made effectual by this “gift of faith.”
35. The term “irresistible grace” is defined in chapter 10 of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Synod of Dort, canon 03/04, paragraph 10. We’ll quote the latter:

Bray, Gerald (ed.). “The Canons of the Synod of Dort, 1619.” In *Documents of the English Reformation*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 467:

Of the Corruption of Man, his Conversion to God and the Manner thereof.

10. That (those) who are called by the Gospel obey the call and are converted, is not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of freewill ... but it must be wholly ascribed to God, who, as he hath chosen his own from eternity in Christ, so he calls them effectually in time, confers upon them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his own Son ...

36. Those who subscribe to the doctrine of unlimited atonement assert that “faith alone in Christ alone” involves a lucid academic understanding of the gospel to which human free will responds with a personal belief that the information is true.



37. The verb “to believe” is transitive and therefore must have an object that the individual agrees is qualified and trustworthy to accomplish what is proposed.
38. This “belief” is a firm conviction that Jesus is the means by which one’s sins are forgiven, salvation is gained, and eternal life is acquired. This conclusion is reached under the ministry of the Holy Spirit called “common grace.”
39. Once faith is expressed, the Holy Spirit takes this faith and makes it effectual for salvation. This is referred to as “efficacious grace.”
40. The “efficacious grace” of those who subscribe to unlimited atonement is not to be confused with the “irresistible grace” of proponents of limited atonement.
41. “Efficacious grace” recognizes that the Holy Spirit is the Agent of salvation but for this ministry to occur it is conditional upon unmolested human free will—no coercion, no cajoling, only solicitation through the clear presentation of the Gospel.
42. On the other hand, “irresistible grace” asserts that the faith that enables the sinner to express belief in Christ is a gift from God, is uncontrollable, and is available only to the elect.
43. But when it is understood that Jesus died for the sins of the entire human race and not just a predetermined few, then it may be safely concluded that anyone who simply believes in Christ will be saved.
44. Faith alone in Christ alone confirms to the believer that he was among the elect in eternity past. Why? Because the very definition of faith—*pistis*—indicates complete confidence in the credibility of the Savior, the veracity of the gospel, and the immutability of its promise, all backed by the integrity of God made certain by the inerrancy of His Word.
45. These things enable the convert to dismiss all uncertainty about his eternal future and to concentrate on executing the spiritual life of the Church Age.
46. However, if we conclude instead that Jesus died only for the elect, we are forced to further conclude that (1) only the elect can be saved and thus all others are reprobate, (2) the latter’s reprobate status was decreed in eternity past, and (3) it is predestined to remain so forever.
47. The doctrine of the “gift of faith” makes the act of faith dependent upon a divine provision that cannot be resisted. Thus, “faith alone in Christ alone” is true but only for the elect.
48. Thus, after having expressed faith in Christ, the hyper-Calvinist must then turn his attention toward proving to himself and others that he is among the elect and therefore saved.
49. Until he does so he can have no confidence that his “faith” was made possible by the “gift of faith” but must wonder instead if it was only “temporary faith.”
50. He is told that he may verify this not by appealing to Scripture for assurance but rather by focusing his attention and efforts on producing “fruits” which are described as “good works.” However, these efforts are energized by a false motivation: to prove that one’s faith was efficacious for salvation and not the “temporary faith” of a reprobate.



51. The definition of *pistis* contains within its definition the principle that one places complete confidence in the veracity of the object. Should one express faith in Christ and then doubt his status before God means he must either question the integrity of God or the system of theology that would produce such a contradiction.
52. To pursue a lifestyle which emphasizes the production of good works in an effort to prove one's status converts the alleged "irresistible grace" into a desperate search for assurance.
53. Self-emphasis takes priority over God-emphasis. Self-serving becomes one's motivation rather than God-service. Self-glorification becomes the objective rather than God's glorification.
54. Fruits assumed to be "good works" are energy of the flesh and are in reality human good which burns at the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ or is cited as one's indictment at the Great White Throne judgment.
55. Divine good is designed by God as the legitimate method by which the believer may serve, praise, and glorify Him and in the end receive rewards and blessings for doing so.
56. Thus, there is no way that a person can perform legitimate divine good when the source of his motivation is to prove to himself, and often to others, whether or not he is among the elect. His emphasis for doing "good works" becomes self-validation, not confidence in God's Word. Whatever fruit he produces automatically becomes human good at best.
57. The person who set this apostasy in motion was Theodore Bèza (1519-1605) and prolonged by his followers who included William Perkins (1558-1602), Richard Rogers (1550-1618), John Dod (1555-1645), and William Bradshaw (1571-1618) among others. All are given mention in chapter six of R. T. Kendall's book, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*.