

either instructors or instructed to presume to tempt God in the Church by separating what he of his good pleasure hath most intimately joined together. For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our duty, the more eminent usually is this blessing of God working in us, and the more directly is his work advanced; to whom alone all the glory, both of means and their saving fruit and efficacy, is forever due. Amen.

-- *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), Volume III, pp. 590, 592.

Those who make this objection should realize that their opposition to this doctrine as "representing men's salvation as independent of their own obedience" could be understood to mean that they believe that human works are (or are a part of) the foreseen basis of man's salvation. Of course, what is usually meant by this objection is that the doctrine of unconditional election seems to them to teach that the salvation of the elect is certain no matter what kind of lives they live.

Not only does this objection (once again) disregard the means which God has ordained (including regeneration and its outworking); it also introduces a rather dangerous principle. The dangerous aspect of this objection is that it can also be levelled against certain other doctrines -- including Justification and Assurance of Salvation. The real heart of the objection lies in the principle that certainly of one's salvation leads inevitably to licentiousness, lawlessness, and the assumption of liberty to indulge any and every form of immorality. The fear is that if man is certain of his salvation, then he can live as he pleases!

Not only was this principle rejected at the time of the Reformation; and not only is it rejected throughout Scripture (Rom. 6-8 is a classic example); but it appears that the principle is false in human experience! (which admittedly is not a particularly surprising or exciting piece of intelligence, seeing that we have just noted that it is rejected throughout Scripture). Nevertheless, it is a fact worth mentioning. Horatius Bonar says that assurance of a perfect, complete, right standing with God is nothing less than "the root and soil of holiness."

12. "This doctrine destroys the possibility of personal assurance of salvation."

This objection reflects a concern evinced by a great many believers. As such, it calls for special treatment.

To begin with, this objection is anticipated in several creedal statements. For example, in Chapter III of the *Westminster Confession* the statement is made that "the doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men, attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel."

In *The Irish Articles of Religion* (A.D. 1615) the following is found:

"The godlike consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the