

REPENTANCE

by James Durham

Durham's Puritan exposition of the doctrine of repentance, examining its nature, necessity, marks, and fruits from the perspective of Scottish Reformed theology.

1 Chapters

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1. Repentance

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Repentance Concerning Repentance. From James Durham, A Learned and Complete Commentary Upon the Book of the Revelation (Glasgow, 1788). The text in places has been compared with the last edition, A Learned, etc. vol. 1. (Falkirk, 1799), noted with a superscript 1799. Overall, the 1788 printing is the superior edition.

REPENTANCE is much called for in these epistles, and that with peremptory certification of coming wrath, if the same prevent it not, as we may see in the epistle to these of Ephesus (Revelation 2:5), who look like a people real in the work of God, though under some decay. It is also called for from Pergamos (Revelation 2:16). Yea, Jezebel has a door of mercy opened to her, upon supposition of repentance (Revelation 2:21-22). This also is required of Sardis (Revelation 3:3) and of Laodicea (Revelation 3:21). For clearing of which places, and other truths concerning repentance, it may be inquired once for all: I. If repentance is simply necessary for preventing of wrath, and obtaining of the pardon of sin? II. In what respect it is necessary, and how it concurs thereto? III. If to a believer's recovery after his sins the exercise of repentance be necessary? IV. If so, what kind of repentance. For understanding of all, we would permit, that repentance may fall under a threefold consideration:

1. It may be considered as somewhat previous in time to the exercise of faith and pardon of sin. This is properly legal sorrow, and is a common work of the Spirit, which may be in one whose sins will never be pardoned. It is therefore not of itself gracious, although the Lord may sometimes make use thereof for a sinner's humbling and awakening before his conversion. This is not the repentance that is pressed here.

2. It may be considered, as it not only follows pardon, but also the intimation thereof; so it is a melting of heart, and a self-loathing that flows from felt love, as the promise of the covenant is (Ezekiel 16:63; Ezekiel 36:31). This is the melting of heart spoken of in that woman, who loved much, because much was forgiven her (Luke 7:47). Neither is this that which is principally intended here.

We may consider repentance as a work of sanctifying grace, arising from the sense of bypast sin, and hope of future mercy, whereby the heart is both affected with indignation in respect of what is past, and warmed with desire and love in respect of what it expects. And so [it] differs from the first, which arises from apprehended future wrath; and from the second, which flows from felt-received mercy. This repentance goes along with faith and the exercise thereof, for the attaining of the hoped-for remission, which [with]1799 a thorough impression of the freeness thereof, in respect of the person's felt sinfulness. That is, the sorrow after a godly manner, which is spoken of [in] 2 Corinthians 7:11. And it is that which is principally intended here, and in other places, where repentance is required in order to remission of sin.

1. In answer then to the first question, we say that repentance, understood in the last sense, is simply necessary for the obtaining of the pardon of sin, so that without it no unreconciled sinner can expect peace with God; which we thus make out: 1. From several places of scripture, and first, by these places where the command of repentance is prefixed to the obtaining of pardon, and preventing of wrath; and that by way of certification, that if it be not, remission is not to be expected. As Acts 3:19. Repent that your sins may be blotted out. Which implies that without this, the blotting out of sin is not to be expected. Otherwise the proposing of the blotting out of sin could be no great motive to press the exercise thereof, which is the apostle's scope. As also [in] Acts 2:38 [and] Acts 8:22, and so in all other places where repentance is pressed as a means [means] for attaining of that end.

2. We may add these places where the connection between repentance and pardon is more peremptorily enforced, as Luke 13:2-3. Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish -- than which nothing can be more clear -- and Proverbs 28:13, He that covereth sin, shall not prosper: but he that confesseth and forsaketh (which is, upon the matter all one with repentance) shall find mercy.

3. It is confirmed from such places as ground the cause of peoples' ruin upon their not repenting, as in Leviticus 26:1-46, Amos 4:1-13, Ezekiel 18:1-32, Revelation 16:1-21, etc., and many such places, is clear; where this, they repented not, is given as the cause of God's continued quarrel against them.

All these considerations we will find in these epistles, where the Lord not only requires the exercise of repentance by command; but threatens judgment, except repentance prevent (Revelation 2:5, Revelation 2:16, Revelation 2:22). And it is particularly marked to be the ground of his continued controversy with Jezebel (Revelation 2:21), that she did not repent, and so Revelation 3:21. In the second place, this may be made out, if we consider the promises of God's covenant, in which remission of sins is subjoined to the exercise of repentance as necessarily antecedent, so that without it there is no access to any promise of pardon. See, first, Leviticus 26:40-42. If they shall confess their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant. Which presupposes confession, and the exercise of repentance, and the humbling of the heart, to go before the application of the covenant. And lest it should be thought a legal covenant, it is expressly said to be the covenant with Isaac and Abraham, which cannot be denied to be of grace. The like also may be gathered from 1 Kings 8:47, where Solomon expressly covenants for pardon on these terms. And (2 Chronicles 7:13) the Lord expressly assents to these articles. Yet this is a covenant of grace, being a covenant for obtaining of pardon through faith in Christ Jesus, whereof praying toward the temple and mercy seat, was a type. And it is expressly said to be, upon the matter, God's covenant with David. Which cannot be denied to be the same covenant of grace with that comprehended in the gospel, seeing the mercies sworn to the fathers Abraham and David, are the same mercies that are now conferred upon believers. And although there were some peculiar promises made to Abraham and David in respect of their own seed, and some other things; yet these peculiar promises were not the grounds of their own justification, much less are they to be pleaded by any other for that end. Now the covenant's end as it holds forth remission and its essential promises must be common to all. It may be confirmed also from 1 John 1:9. If we confess our sins, God is faithful to pardon, etc. Which supposes [supposes] that there is no engagement, to speak so, upon God's faithfulness to pardon any sinner but him who repents. In the third and last place, the necessity of repentance may be confirmed, if we consider the

qualifications of such persons as God pronounces pardon unto in his word. It is not to sinners as sinners simply, but to lost sinners (that is, lost in their own eyes). Such as are weary and loaded [laden], such as are broken in heart, grieved, wounded, etc. As appears from Isaiah 61:1-2, and elsewhere. All which qualifications show the necessity of repentance in a person that may expect pardon. It is true, both repentance and remission are Christ's gift, but in this method he gives first repentance, and then remission (Acts 5:31). And though he came to call sinners; yet he calls them to repentance, as that which makes way for their getting good of him. From what is said, we may gather these two conclusions in opposition to the doctrine of the Antinomians. The first is that repentance is not legal duty unbecoming for a minister of the gospel to preach, or a professor thereof to exercise with respect to the obtaining of pardon. And that it is not only to be looked after and to be pressed upon the account of the faith of sins being already pardoned. Secondly, it follows from this that remission of sin is no immanent or eternal act of God; but is a transient act, and that after the committing of the sin. For if remission presupposes repentance, it must also presuppose the sin to be committed, because repentance presupposes that. And therefore it cannot be from eternity. This opinion of sin's being remitted from eternity, stands and falls with the former, viz. of the needlessness of repentance for the obtaining of pardon. And therefore the overturning of the one, is the overturning of both. It is true, God's purpose and decree of pardoning sin, is eternal, as all his decrees are. But this actual pardoning of a sinner is no more from eternity, than his creating or glorifying men; yea, in the same decree he has proposed the giving both of repentance and pardon, in the method laid down.

If it be said, that thus it will infer, 1. That there is no difference between the elect in respect of their estate before repentance, and reprobates. And, 2. That it will infer some change to be in God, if he should behold sin in a person immediately before his repentance, and not thereafter; both which, say they, are absurd. For answer to the first, we say that if we consider an elect person before conversion, with respect to himself, and to the law and covenant of works, without respect to God's purpose, there is indeed no difference between him and a reprobate; because they are both as impenitent unbelievers without the covenant; without hope, and dead in sins and trespasses, as is spoken even of the elect (Ephesians 2:1-2, Ephesians 2:12). And both of them are under the curse, seeing the law does indifferently curse all that have sinned, and are not by faith in Christ. This is no absurdity; but contributes exceedingly to the humbling of the elect, and to the advancement of grace. Again, if we consider the Lord's purpose, there is a great difference, although, as it is his purpose, it makes no real change, except in the manner, time, and method in which he has purposed it to be. To the second we answer, that this does not infer any change in God's will, as if he now willed that which he would not before, [any] more than to say his will changes when he glorifies a person which he did not actually glorify before, although he purposed indeed to do the same. It only proves that there is a change wrought upon the creature, who is glorified, by that same unchangeable will of God, which did, before the world, decree that in due time to be done. So it is here; in time he pardons and makes a change upon the creature's state, by that same will, and in the same manner as it was decreed. And this is no absurdity; because according to the rule, although God cannot change his will, yet he may will a change upon the creature -- *et si deus non potest mutare voluntatem, potest tamen velle mutationem* [et Deus non potest mutare voluntatem, potest tamen velle mutationem]1799.

II. There is more difficulty in answering the second question, viz. in what respects repentance is necessary for obtaining the pardon of sin, and how it contributes to the obtaining thereof? As Antinomians give too little to it, on the one hand, so on the other, Papists, Socinians, and Arminians, give too much. To guard therefore against those extremities, we say, against Papists,

1. That repentance is not necessary as having any efficiency in it for the expelling of sin, by the in-bringing of a contrary gracious quality; as light expels darkness. For remission of sins, being to them the infusing of habitual grace, and repentance being a part of that inherent holiness, in this respect they account repentance necessary as a part of our formal righteousness, by which sin is expelled, and the person constituted formally and inherently just. This indeed is an absurd overturning of the nature of true remission of sins (which consists in God's not imputing the same to us, or in his blotting them out), and alters the whole strain of the gospel.

2. We say that repentance does not concur for the obtaining of the pardon of sin, as any material cause disposing the soul for the receiving of a gracious quality, for the expelling of sin; or, as being a prerequisite matter to God's working thereof in the soul. This we reject as absurd, upon the grounds foresaid. For, though we acknowledge the soul of man, yea, the whole man to be the object whom God pardons; yet pardon, being a judicial act of his grace, it can admit of no material cause.

3. Neither does repentance concur for the obtaining of pardon by way of merit, as if there were any congruity or condignity therein for obtaining thereof. This mars the freedom of forgiveness, and encroaches upon Christ Jesus' offices, who is the alone immediate and meritorious cause of our being accepted, and obtaining pardon.

4. Repentance does not concur by way of satisfaction, as if the grief that does accompany it upon our sensitive part within, were some satisfaction or recompense for the offence committed against God, and so had influence, as it were, to procure the easier terms from him. In which respect they do place whippings, fastings, and such like, as satisfactions without, concurring for the remission of sin, at least in its temporal punishment, as this does within. This also we abhor, as derogatory to the alone satisfaction of our Lord Jesus, who, by his once offering up of himself, has perfected forever them that believe (Hebrews 10:14).

5. Neither do we establish a sacrament of penance, thereby instrumentally to communicate remission of sins (that is, habitual grace, as they understand it) by the power of the keys, in the priest's absolution, and that ex opere operato. This we disclaim, as being without any warrant in the word, and certainly cannot be imagined to be the thing called for in the fore-cited scriptures.

These ways are indeed pleaded for by the Papists, who thereby do overturn the whole nature of repentance, remission of sins, and the covenant of grace; and do enervate the consolation of poor penitents (as may be further spoken to from Revelation 9:1-21) but are disclaimed by us in doctrine, and ought to be adverted to in practice, lest the doctrine of the necessity of repentance be abused beyond that which is warrantable. We have for that cause disclaimed these assertions explicitly; as also, that thereby many, and almost all the Antinomian arguments and calumnies may be answered and removed, who have nothing rifer [more common] in their mouths and writings than this, that the pressing of the absolute necessity of repentance is a point of Popery, a marring of the freedom of grace, a crying up of inherent holiness, and such like. Which are most unjust, as said is. The Socinians and Arminians do also acknowledge the necessity of repentance;

and although they give it no proper casual influence upon the remission of sins; yet do they miscarry in reference thereto, in these respects, which we also disclaim.

1. Albeit, repentance is necessary, yet it is not necessary as any prerequisite qualification to be performed by us in the strength of our own free will. This were, indeed, to make nature a sharer in our conversion, and to give it occasion of boasting, contrary to the scope of the gospel, which excludes that. It is indeed we who repent formally, and our will and soul is the subject wherein it is wrought; and to say, Christ is formally the penitent, we abhor. Yet it is by the strength of grace working in us to will and to do (Php 2:13), that we do repent, and that our wills are enabled to illicit acts of true repentance. So that if we will consider these acts of repentance, as they are acts simply, and are in categoria actionis, they are our acts, and performed by our wills, as the next formal cause producing them. But if we consider them as such; that is, as gracious, and acts of saving repentance in categoria qualitatis, they are not from us; but do proceed from the grace of God alone, sweetly and powerfully determining the will in the bringing forth of them.

2. We say, repentance has no moving efficacy in it, so as to be an external impulsive cause, or, ratio movens, why God should forgive sins, as repentance, and resenting of wrongs committed, have influence to move provoked men to forgive, and pity those that have offended them. This seems plausible-like to men, who cast the way of grace in a mould of human and natural reason; and inadvertently in practice may be fallen into by many, who, though they disclaim a meritoriousness in their repentance, yet are ready to conclude some prevailing persuasive efficacy to be in it. Which appears by this, that when they are satisfied with their own repentance, they more confidently expect pardon; and when their sensibleness in repentance dries up, they are ready to question it, as if they were some weight in their repentance of itself to prevail with God, and persuade him, as it were, to pity. This, I say, is not to be admitted; because God's will, being absolutely pure, simple and sovereign, is not capable of any motus from any cause without itself. And forgiveness being an act simply of grace, and ordered alone in all its manner of proceeding by his sovereignty, there can no reason be imagined moving him thereto, although he want not reason in his acting, as they say, *Datur ratio voluntatis divinae, sed non ejusdem movens*. This also would propose the most high and holy One, as some way having passions to be wrought upon, like unto us; and would obscure exceedingly the freedom and sovereignty of grace, which has always its rise in his own bosom. Therefore it is asserted by divines in this case, that properly it is not our repentance that makes our sins either actually to be remitted, or yet to be remissible, but God's grace alone. For if grace had not ordered the connection between repentance and remission, upon grounds laid down by itself, no sinners could have expected pardon, nor would their sins have been remissible even upon supposition of their repentance, more than if there had not been repentance, if such a supposition may be made.

3. We say that repentance does not concur for the obtaining of remission of sins, as it is a piece of our own new obedience, and of the condition of the covenant of grace, and so now to be imputed to us, with faith and the other graces for righteousness, instead of the perfect holiness which was the condition of the covenant of works; as, if now God, in the pardoning of penitent sinners, their sins should respect Christ's imputed righteousness as the immediate cause making them acceptable to him, but the very acts themselves of faith, repentance, etc., and so the first covenant of works will be man's performing of all holy duties according to the commands perfectly; which covenant being now broken, and man made unable by sin to perform the condition thereof, this

opinion supposes Christ's satisfaction to have procured (which yet Socinians deny, as any procuring cause of) a new covenant upon these terms, that sinners, who are short of perfect holiness, and yet do believe, and repent of their sins should be accepted; and these acts of believing, repentance, etc., should be accounted to them by virtue of that covenant, as if their obedience had been perfect. This way is not sufferable, because it shuts out Christ's imputed righteousness from being the next immediate and meritorious cause of our justification; and continues the covenant to be in substance a covenant of works for its form. Although it place no condignity of merit in these works; yet by this it is still some work of ours that is the ground of our defense before God's justice, and so cannot be admitted. For even faith itself, in this case, comes not in to be considered, but as it unites with its object, viz. Christ Jesus in the promise, as has been said.

These ways which are more gross, being disowned (so that there is neither ground to charge us with Popery nor Arminianism, for our asserting the necessity of repentance) we come now to show, positively, in what respect it is necessary.

1. We say repentance is necessary not only by necessity of precept, but also of means [means], *necessitate et praecepti et medii*; that is, not only as a duty laid on by God, but as a means appointed by him for attaining that end, viz. remission of sins. In which respect a penitent, or repenting sinner, may be said to be using the means how pardon is attained, and to be in the way of obtaining it, which cannot be said of a sinner that repents not. For although repentance as absolutely considered in itself, does not make a penitent any nearer unto remission; yet it being considered in respect of God's contrivance, and of the order which he has laid down, and the promise which he has subjoined to it, it may well be called a way and means for attaining to pardon.

2. Beside this, there is a kind of congruity and suitableness in this order which God has laid down, by subjoining the promise of pardon to it. Thus it is more suitable that a penitent sinner should have pardon, than an impenitent. Because he is a more congruous object (to speak so) for grace to show itself gracious upon, than if there were a continuing in security. Neither has this congruity any casualty or merit in it; but only shows God's wise contrivance in appointing a means [means] suitable to his end, which is the glorifying of his grace; and the making of himself to be precious to the sinner.

3. Repentance concurs in the obtaining of pardon, by qualifying the sinner in reference to the promise, wherein pardon is proposed. Which is not to be understood, as if this qualification were a thing previous to a saving work of God's grace, or, as if it did dispose the subject for receiving of any inherent quality. Or, lastly, as if there were any merit in it to commend the person so qualified unto God, for the attaining of pardon. These things we have already rejected. But it may be said to qualify a person in these two respects: 1. That it puts one within the reach of the promise, which speaks pardon to none but to such who are so qualified. And thus it qualifies the person merely with respect to the promise, and the qualification contained in it. And so a true penitent sinner may be said to be qualified for remission, and may take hold of the promises that make offer of the same, which no other, not so qualified, can do; because the promises are peculiarly held forth to such who are so qualified. 2. It qualifies the sinner in reference to the promise, as it disposes him to accept the offered salvation freely, and to rest upon Christ alone for that end. Thus it qualifies

for obtaining of pardon, as felt poverty qualifies a proud beggar to receive willingly an offered alms, and to be thankful for it. Neither is the alms the less free, that it requires one sensible of poverty to receive it. But it is rather the more free, and acknowledged to be so, when it is conferred. Even so it is here.

There is one thing more questioned, even among orthodox divines; that is if repentance may be accounted a condition of the covenant with faith; and if in that respect it be necessary, and do concur for the obtaining of pardon? For answer (that we may not digress long in this) we shall lay down some assertions, after we have permitted this distinction. A condition may be taken more largely for anything required as an antecedent for obtaining the thing promised. In this sense, there may be many conditions. 2. It may be taken more strictly and properly for that upon which the closing of the covenant depends, and that upon which, as such, cannot be considered but as implying the closing thereof. 3. A condition may be taken as it looks to some consequent following the close, and is virtually implied therein. As for instance, in marriage there are several things necessary, as the hearing of the proposal, the believing historically the truth of the thing heard, an esteem of it, and a desire to have it, with a loathness to offend the party proposing it. These are supposed to be requisite and necessary in one that is called to marry, that she should forget her kindred and her father's house, and cleave to the husband, etc. Yet none of these resolutions, or qualifications, are properly the condition of the marriage-covenant, but the parties consent to accept the offered match upon the terms proposed. The actual and positive solemn declaration whereof, in the approved way, is that which formerly closes the match, and entitles the party so accepting to the husband, which none of these former qualifications did. After which, there follows the performance of marriage-duties, the obligation whereof was contained in the marriage-contract. Yet cannot they be accounted properly the condition of the marriage-covenant, because the performing of them presupposes the marriage. Just so is it here. There are some things that in a large sense are prerequisite to the closing of the covenant, or at least do go alongst with it, as conviction of sin, repentance, historical faith, desire of peace and union with God, etc. Something, viz. faith, does actually close therewith. Some things follow thereon, as duties to be performed by one in covenant, as the duties of holiness, and bringing forth the fruits of it, etc.

Assertion 1. Now, to come to our assertions, the First of them is this. If we take a condition largely, repentance may be called a condition of the covenant, as sensible poverty may be called a condition upon which alms are given; or, as the forsaking of the father's house, and cleaving to the husband, may be called a condition of the covenant, because it is supposed.

Assertion 2. Yet, Secondly, we assert, that if we take a condition strictly and properly, repentance cannot be called the condition of the covenant, but faith only, in that proper strict sense. Because,

1. In the opposition of the two covenants of works and grace, faith is put in opposition to works, and repentance is not so formally opposed (Romans 10:5-6, etc.). And faith in that place is to be understood properly as distinguished from other graces of repentance, love, etc; because it is that faith which does peculiarly justify in opposition to works, and as contra-distinguished from them.

2. Because that which is the condition of the covenant of grace, and succeeds to the condition of the covenant of works, must be something laying hold on an external object without a man, viz. Christ's righteousness. For the performing of the condition must be the ground of our expecting the thing promised; which only Christ's righteousness, laid hold on, can be reckoned to be. But

repentance cannot act thus upon Christ's righteousness, by taking hold of it without a man's self, but it acts upon an object within himself, viz. upon his own sins, in turning from them to God, which yet it does but imperfectly; and so cannot be opposed in reckoning with God, in place of the condition of the covenant of works. Therefore repentance cannot be properly the condition of the covenant of grace, nor yet a thing that is merely inherent in us, and does not so act upon Christ, whereof more was said formerly.

If it be said that faith is an inherent grace, no less than repentance: the answer is easy, viz. That faith is not considered merely as an inherent grace, when it is called the condition of the covenant, but as it unites to Christ, and closes with him offered in the gospel. Even as in a marriage consent, willingness and contentedness to marry such a man, although it be an act of the will, yet as it is an act of the will, it is not considered as the condition of the marriage-knot, but as it relates to a proposed match, and is the accepting thereof. And hence, though love, respect to the party, and other things be necessary to marriage, and in a large sense may be called conditions thereof; yet are they not properly the condition which constitutes a person married to another, because they act not so as to receive and close with the proposed offer.

3. Repentance is not that which formerly constitutes one a covenanter; because one is not a covenanter as he is a penitent, but as he is a believer. For the immediate satisfying ground of one's claim to the covenant is, because by faith he has received the offer; and therefore as such he has right to the covenant. It will not so follow from repentance, viz. upon this formal consideration; he exercises repentance, therefore upon that formal consideration he is a covenanter. It is true, it is an evidence of the former, because a penitent is a covenanter. But his being a penitent is not the ratio formalis of his being a covenanter; only it supposes him to have by faith closed with the covenant. For we may consider repenting as abstracted from formal closing and covenanting, although we cannot separate the one from the other. But we cannot consider believing as acting on its object, but we must consider it as closing with the covenant. Therefore repentance cannot properly be the condition of the covenant as faith is:

4. That which is properly the condition, does of itself, upon its fulfilling, give one a title to the things promised, and becomes the ground of a right unto them. It was so upon supposition of fulfilling the covenant of works, and it is so in all covenants. But repentance cannot do so; therefore, etc. If it is said, although repentance cannot so do it alone, yet faith and it may do so together; and seeing, by this opinion, faith is admitted with repentance jointly to the condition of the covenant, that argument cannot hold; because it is not said that repentance is the only condition.

Answ. The argument shuts out repentance from being accounted any part of the proper condition, thus, if repentance cannot jointly, with believing in Christ, be put in as a piece of our righteousness before God's throne, then it can be no part of the proper condition, because the performing of the proper condition has a ground in all covenants to plead for the performance of what is promised, and the absolving of the party fulfilling the same, upon that account. But the former cannot be said of repentance; for our repentance can no way be alleged before God's justice as our righteousness. Ergo, etc. This may be made out thus: If repentance may be tabled as any part of our righteousness, then it must be either as a grace inherent in us, or as it acts on Christ's righteousness without us. But neither can be said. Not the first, because no inherent grace is to be admitted in that respect, in whole or in part. Not the second, because repentance has no such

faculty of acting on Christ's righteousness, as has been said. Therefore cannot be said to concur at all.

5. If receiving of Christ's offer be the formal and proper condition of the covenant alone, then repentance cannot be any part of the proper condition thereof, because it is not by repentance, but by faith that we do receive him. But the former is true. Receiving and closing with Christ by faith, is the only proper condition thereof. Therefore, etc. Beside what is said in the former discourse, this appears thus: If receiving of Christ by faith, does only formally entitle one to the covenant and all the promises thereof as such, then it must be formally the proper condition; because that entitling to the thing promised, is the great character of a proper condition. But faith only is such. And therefore is the righteousness of this covenant called peculiarly the righteousness of faith, and not of repentance, love, etc. Because faith gives a title to the righteousness covenanted, which repentance does not. And because in the performing of the mercies covenanted in the way of grace, greater weight is laid on faith than on repentance, or any other grace.

Again, that faith is the proper condition may appear thus, because it is properly and expressly proposed as the condition (Acts 8:37). It is said to the eunuch, If thou believest thou mayest be baptized; and (Acts 16:30-31), to the jailor, when the question is expressly proposed, What shall I do to be saved? Believe, Paul says, and thou shalt be saved. So answered the Lord (John 6:28-29). This is the work of God to believe, etc. Neither can it in reason be objected, that as these places do propose faith, so other places do propose repentance as the condition (as Acts 2:38, etc.). For it cannot be denied, but faith does otherwise act on Christ's righteousness and the covenant than repentance can do; and therefore faith is acknowledged to be principal. Whereas, if that objection held, repentance and works would be equaled with it. We therefore take it thus: where repentance is proposed, there the whole way of turning to God more generally is proposed. But where faith is proposed, that which more properly and peculiarly states our interest in God is proposed, as the consideration of the formal actings of these graces will clear, and is wholly denied by none.

6. That must be the proper condition of the covenant, which entitles God to the person, as the person to God. For the covenant being mutual, that which gives men a right to God, and brings them within the compass of the covenant, must constitute them to be God's, and give him also a right to them, by virtue thereof. But it is not repentance that gives God formally a title to a soul, but it is receiving of him by faith, and submitting to his righteousness. Therefore it must not be repentance, but faith, that is the proper condition. This is seen in a marriage covenant. For that is the woman's condition, upon her part, which entitles her to her husband, as well as her husband to her. Now, it is not repentance that gives up one to Christ as his, as is clear, but faith, etc., that delivers up a person to him, and is that whereby one takes him and consents to be his. And therefore it is faith that entitles Christ to be his. Ergo, etc.

7. If all these works were the condition of the covenant, then entry into the covenant were a successive work, and not instantaneous; but this is absurd. Therefore not these but faith alone is the condition of the covenant. For if an hour, yea, in an instant at a sermon, a man may have his heart opened to receive Christ, and by that have a right to baptism as a covenanter, then it is not successive; but the former is truth, Ergo.

8. If these works were the condition and not faith only, then upon supposition of faith, the sacrament of baptism could not be administered. But it behooved to have antecedent to it, not only the purpose, but the actual performing of these works; because baptizing supposes the accepting of the covenant. What therefore entitles one in profession, must, when it is really done, be the condition of the inward covenanting.

9. If faith be the proper condition, then repentance cannot be so; because faith is not a condition of the covenant, merely as it is a grace, but as it is peculiarly qualified in its manner of acting. Now, repentance not being qualified with that manner of acting, cannot be a part of the proper condition.

(1) Because if so, then were graces of different actings admitted to concur in the same capacity and manner of acting contrary to their natures.

(2) If so, then not only repentance but every grace, and all good works might be accounted parts of the proper condition of the covenant, as well as repentance and faith, if there were no peculiarity in faith's acting respected in this. And though this may be counted no absurdity by some; yet to such as plead only to join repentance with faith, it may have weight. And to others we propose these considerations:

First, that the evidence of light constrains the acknowledging of faith to be eminently the condition beyond all; yea, that it may be called the only condition of the new covenant. 1. Because it is the principal condition, and the other but less principal. 2. Because all the rest are reducible to it, as necessary antecedents of means, etc. (so Mr. Baxter, Apho. thes. 62) and the formal and essential acts of this faith are acknowledged to be subjection, acceptation, consent, cordial covenanting, and self resigning. Now if faith be the principal condition, and that as acting so, in which respects no other grace can act, then certainly faith has a peculiar property here, and that not as a grace simply, but in respect of the formality of its acting; which confirms all that is said. And thus, faith is not the principal condition, as being only so in degree (like a chief city amongst many cities), but in respect of a different manner of acting, and an excellency, to say so, that is in it in that respect, such acts being peculiar and proper to it, which are the proper characters of a proper condition. And if so, seeing all other things mentioned are acknowledged as necessary antecedents or means, or implied duties, etc. why should there be a contending about words, and a new controversy stated for the nature of a condition, when the church is almost suffocated with controversies already?

Secondly, if works be the condition equally with faith, then our being accounted covenanters must follow actual holiness, and till then, none are indeed covenanters; which is absurd, as was formerly said. For so, none could otherwise have right to any thing in the covenant. If it is said, these are seminally, and in purpose, at the entry, that will not answer it. Because it is not the purpose, but the actual performing of the condition that gives right. Beside, if a purpose satisfy for a condition in these, then either seminal faith, or a purpose thereof is to be admitted also, which is absurd. Or, if actual faith is required, and but other conditions in purpose, then it is actual faith, and not these that are the proper condition of the covenant.

Thirdly, if these graces and good works are the condition of the covenant, then it is either in respect of their particular acts, or of persevering in them; but neither can be said. Ergo, etc. Not particular acts, because the scripture hangs the prize on overcoming, continuing to the end, etc.

and not on acts. Nor can it be perseverance; because so, no benefit of the covenant could be pleaded till it were ended. For it is the entire condition and not a part thereof that gives title and right. But it is absurd that none should have right to any benefit before perseverance is ended, whereas perseverance is a privilege that a covenanter may claim. These may indeed be called somewhat conditions of obtaining the possession of the great benefit in the covenant, but not of the covenant itself; and are duties implied to be performed by a covenanter, but cannot be conditions upon which he is admitted. And though somewhat to this purpose was said formerly, yet the matter being so like, there is no hazard or prejudice from this coincidence.

Assertion 3. Although in strict speaking, repentance be not the proper condition of the covenant; yet as to the naming of it a condition, or not, we conceive there is no great ground of debate. And if the matter is very well guarded, the expression may be suffered; otherwise it is no strife about words. We conceive that the guarding of the matter requires:

1. That these errors both of Papists, Arminians, and Socinians, formerly mentioned, be carefully eschewed, and that, by giving it the name of a condition, we do not fasten upon it any of these senses, especially the last, to which it is most liable.

2. This would be guarded, that repentance be not shuffled in as a piece of our righteousness, or that which we make an immediate defense and shelter against the justice of God, of which somewhat has been formerly spoken.

3. This would be guarded, that repentance be not accounted to be a condition in that same capacity and formality of acting as faith is; because that would either confound the nature of these graces, or wrong the way of the gospel, wherein ever something peculiarly is attributed to faith.

III. We come now to the third thing proposed, that is, if repentance is necessary to a justified person for obtaining the pardon of sins committed after justification, as well as before it. To which we answer shortly, that the scripture holds forth the same necessity in this case as in the former.

1. Because there is the same order in the commands that are given, and the promises that are made to them for obtaining pardon, as may be gathered from the epistle to these in Ephesus, who may well be supposed to be believers; and the ground is general in this epistle to Laodicea (ver. 19). Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten, saith the Lord, be zealous therefore and repent. Where repentance is put in as a necessary means [means] for removing of God's rebuke and quarrel, even from them whom he loves.

2. The promises made to believers run in the same terms. 1 John 1:9: If we confess, God is faithful to pardon, etc. Where John keeps the same method in reference to pardon, even when he wrote to believers; and puts himself in the roll.

3. Experience also confirms the same, as we may gather from David (Psalms 32:3-4). While I kept silence my bones waxed old, etc. but I confessed unto thee, and thou forgavest me, etc. In which place this connection and order is clear. Neither can it be said that David only obtained the sense of pardon. (1) Because he himself accounts it pardon, and such happiness as proceeds from the not imputation of sin [ed. meaning is probably "as proceeds from the non-imputation of sin." The 1799 edition reads "such happiness as proceeds not from the imputation of sin"]. (2) Because (Romans 4:1-25) the apostle makes use of this experience for the describing and confirming of

justification itself, which could not have been, if the place had spoke only of the declaration thereof. And it cannot be otherwise, seeing the law curses every sinner, and the gospel absolves none but the penitent. It may be gathered also from Nathan's word to David (2 Samuel 12:1-31) declaring his [sin] to be pardoned after his acknowledging, which supposes it not to have been so before that time. So also it may be gathered from the Lord's dealing with Job's friends (Job 42:1-17) with whom the Lord was angry, till they humbled themselves before God.

Neither can it be well objected here, that this may hazard the perseverance of the saints, supposing that some of them may die without actual repentance. For 1 [ed. there is no point 2 in the text, so numbers in bold face have been added as most made sense], the doctrine and nature of the covenant betwixt God and believers, includes a two-fold impossibility. 1 That a sinful believer can be pardoned without repentance, because the Lord has appointed that order and method, and that wisely and graciously, for the scaring of believers from sin, for the humbling of them under it, and for directing of them how to be freed from it. And there is need of this, lest believers being in a great part corrupt, should abuse God's goodness. 2. The other is that it is impossible for a justified person to die under sin without repentance.

2. And these two do not cross one another. Because the first is conditional; no justified person, having sin, if he repent not, can be pardoned. The other is absolute, viz. no justified person can die under sin without repentance; because they are kept by the power of God to salvation (1 Peter 1:8). And he who has ordered the end, has also in his covenant ordered the means [means] necessary thereunto; so that they cannot but be again renewed unto repentance. And it is in this, as between election and effectual calling. For, no elect can be justified till he be effectually called, so that if it were possible he should die at age before effectual calling, he could not be saved; yet it is simply impossible that any of them can die before effectual calling; so must it be here in respect of the renewing of faith and repentance.

IV. It will be difficult to clear the fourth thing, viz. what kind of repentance, to speak so, is to be accounted simply necessary for obtaining the pardon of sin; because sometimes persons are not soon satisfied with the degree and kind of their repentance. Sometimes, again, even believers, after foul slips, are taken away without any sensible like work of repentance for the same. It may be questioned therefore, upon the former suppositions, what is to be accounted repentance? In answer to which, we shall first lay down some advertisements concerning repentance in the general, and then some distinctions of the same, from which the answer may be easily formed.

1. It is no peremptory degree of repentance that is required, as simply necessary; it is sincere repentance, having its native fruits that is to be acquiesced in.

2. This sincerity of repentance is not to be judged entirely by the sorrow, horror, or grief that sometimes do accompany it, nor by the continuance thereof in its exercise; because repentance may be true where little of these are. And it may be unsound where much of these are sensible, and that for a long time's continuance, as experience confirms.

3. The sincerity and sufficiency of repentance therefore, is to be tried mainly by the rise and effects thereof, etc. viz. If respect to God's honor affects the heart with the sense of its sin; and if it so affect, as sin becomes hateful, the person is humbled in himself, and brought to esteem of, and put a price upon, God's grace in Christ Jesus, so as to be in love with the same. This is properly

turning, and comprehends the essentials of repentance, whatever the degree of sorrow be.

These advertisements being laid down, we would now consider some distinctions of that repentance that is necessary for pardon, especially in the regenerate, as they are, or may be held forth in several expressions, by several persons.

Distinct. 1. Repentance is either express and explicit; that is, when men both know such things to be sins, and themselves to be guilty of them, and do expressly acknowledge the same, and are affected with them. Or, it is implicit, when men are generally affected for sin, although they be guilty of some things which they do not know to be sins, or know not themselves to be guilty of the same. Of such sort may be the polygamy of several godly men, which is not altogether to be justified, at least, in respect of the extent thereof, in all, as to be so ordinary, to have so many wives, to have them of such consanguinity, as sisters, etc. Of such sort may be the errors which were maintained by many of the godly in the primitive times concerning meats, days, etc. which not being known by them to be sins, cannot be said explicitly to have been repented of; yet that they were impenitent, it cannot be said. Under this also comes in many matters of fact, which are forgotten, not observed, or considered, as appears from Psalms 19:1-14. Lord purge me from secret sins. The last is to be accounted necessary to pardon, viz. that they be penitent. But the first, viz. that repentance should be explicit with respect to every particular sin they are guilty of; this is not to be esteemed necessary in this absolute sense.

Distinct. 2. Repentance is either actual, and that for particular sins, as when Peter repented of his denial, and David of his murder, etc. or it is interpretative and virtual, as when a man is heartily affected for such and such a particular sin, and for the corrupt inclination and body of death that is in him, that is the seed of all, although there be some particular sin, which is either not known to him to be such, or is not actually in his mind; and so cannot be particularly and actually repented of. Yet it may be said, that virtually he repents of the same; because, 1. He repents of all sin in the root and seed thereof; and he may well be constructed to repent of and to loathe all the branches and members, when he is seriously humbled under the impression of the indwelling root and body of death. 2. Because he repents of the sins which are known to him, upon the account which is common to all sin, as sin, viz. its disconformity to the law of God. And therefore may well be constructed to repent virtually of all the sins he is guilty of; because that which is the essence and form, to speak so, of every sin, is detested by him as it is such. And, as it is said, a quatenus ad omne valet consequentia. This last is only pleaded for, as simply necessary, as the former instances do clear.

Distinct. 3. Repentance may either be considered intensively; that is as it affects the heart with a high degree of sorrow; or, it may be considered appreciatively; that is, when sin is seen and acknowledged. And though there be no such intense sorrow, or so sensibly affecting the heart; yet sin is accounted a thing to be sorrowed for, and the heart is weighted that its sorrow is not deeper; and the person reckons itself so far under the body of death, as it cannot be answerable to its light in the exercise of repentance. This last may have the native effects of repentance, viz. the humbling of a sinner, etc. without the former; therefore, at least, the former is not simply necessary. Mark here, that the use of this distinction is exceedingly different from the use which Papists make thereof, viz. for supporting a ruinous inherent righteousness, whereof repentance is a part. And because they cannot find it in that [intensity], as may stand before justice; therefore

they coin a sort of appreciative repentance, which to them is a desire and endeavor in the utmost degree possible, to attain the former, that so they may under-prop the other that is like to ruin; or put this in its room. But there is no such thing here; for, as we understand the appreciative repentance, it is to commend grace, and humble us the more; but, as they do, it is to support works, and can never give a conscience quietness, because it is still defective, even in what it might attain, whereof we possibly shall say somewhat elsewhere.

Distinct. 4. Repentance may be considered as prevalent and taking upon the whole man. And this it carries with it a suitableness in a man's affections and actions, as may be seen in David (Psalms 51:1-19). Or, it may be considered as in the renewed part, which may be lamenting sin, and its own condition, in respect of the tyranny of the body of death, even while it is kept in bondage. It cannot be denied but in this respect Paul was exercising repentance (Romans 7:1-25), when he allowed not that which he did, and was prevailed over by the law of his members. And no question he was looked on as a penitent upon that account. And therefore, not the first of these, but the last, is to be accounted simply necessary. This also may be seen in Ephraim's bemoaning himself (Jeremiah 31:18).

Distinct. 5. We may also consider repentance, as it is known to be such before men, or to the person himself by a palpable recovery. Such was the repentance of David, Peter, etc. Or, we may consider it, as it is known to be such to God only, without such sensible evidences to others, or, it may be, any sensible change to the person itself. Yet may there be real repentance indeed before God. This may be said of Solomon, of whose repentance and pardon we cannot doubt, as also of Asa's; yet has the Lord left them in his word under such a cloud, that their change had not been, at least, very discernible. For, we find these high places that were built by Solomon continuing unremoved for many generations thereafter. Which certainly shows that his repentance has not had so palpable a change before men, as that of Manasses' had. And this is ordered by the Lord in deep wisdom; partly, for a chastisement of their backsliding; partly, to terrify others from the way of declining; and partly, to make all men sober and sparing to pass sentences upon the state of others, however their condition may look before men when they are removed. For the Lord will have the sovereign and infallible decision of their state, viz. whether they be penitents and believers or not, left unto himself alone, who has an insensible way of begetting faith and repentance, and also of recovering and renewing of same, when he pleases.

If it is further moved, how, at the first exercising of repentance and faith, a man can be said to be justified, that is, accepted as righteous, and pardoned of all his sins; seeing his sins after justification are not pardoned, until they be committed and repented of?

Answ. Both are true. For future sins are not actually pardoned till they be committed and repented of. Yet is the man a justified person; and in a justified state, having a ground laid in his justification for obtaining the pardon of these sins that follow, so that they shall not overturn his former absolution. For, God's covenant has both fully in it, yet in due way to be applied. And it is, as if a company of rebels were subdued, and by treaty they are pardoned, changed from that state of enemies to be natural subjects, and privileged with their privileges; so that if they fall in after-faults, as subjects may fall in, yet are they never again counted enemies. Nor is their first freedom cancelled; but they are dealt with as native subjects, falling into such offenses; and have privileges that strangers have not, nor can plead in the same faults. One of which privileges may be

supposed to be, that they shall not be rigidly fallen upon, although their guilt deserve death; but that they shall have means used to reclaim them (and these such as cannot but be effectual) and that upon recovery, they shall be pardoned these faults, and be preserved from the deserved punishments.

It is so by the treaty of grace and justification, the believing sinner is translated from the state of an enemy, to the condition of a friend. This is unalterable; he cannot afterward but be a friend. Yet, because a friend may be ingrate, and fail to his benefactor; therefore, by that treaty, it is provided that there should be a way to forgiveness by virtue of that covenant, yet so, as there should be a new exercise of repentance and faith, for the commending of the way of grace. And so a sinning believer is a sinner, but not in the state of sin; nor is an enemy, as he was before justification, even as a faulty subject is guilty, yet is no enemy, nor rebel, nor can be punished by death, when he becomes penitent, although he deserves it. Because the law of grace is such to the subjects of that kingdom, that their pleading of their former treaty, and betaking themselves to the terms thereof, is ever to be accepted as a righteousness for them, in reference to any particular sin following justification, as well as what proceeded. And this no stranger to God can plead, who has no such ground for his recovery from sin; or, that God will give him repentance for it, much less that he will certainly pardon him. Yea, it differs from a penitent's case at first conversion; because a covenanter may expect pardon by virtue of that same covenant in which he is engaged, and to which he has right already, and he has *jus ad rem*. Another cannot do so, but must consider the covenant as offered only, and so expect pardon, not because God is actually engaged to give it to him, as in the other's case; but because God offers to accept of him on these terms, and then to pardon him.

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