

Week Fifteen, February 16, 2022, Of Saving Faith and Repentance Unto Life

Chapter 14: Of Saving Faith Notice the title is not “Of Faith”, but of “saving” faith. Similarly, WLC 72 speaks of “Justifying Faith” and WSC 86 of “faith in Jesus Christ”. Faith is not being defined, nor its “parts” described. What is being discussed is what *kind* of faith saves and justifies the sinner. The WLC 72 describes two aspects of *justifying* faith: assenting to the truth of the gospel and trusting on Christ for oneself. Saving Faith trusts in the Faith of Scripture: “Sometimes ... the Bible refers to faith as something objective. In that sense ‘the faith’ refers to a set of orthodox doctrines as laid out in Scripture itself.”²⁷⁹ Hence, the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Still, “... faith looks to Jesus Christ himself ... when we are spreading the good news, it should always be clear that the good news is Jesus Himself ...”²⁸⁰ The Bible speaks of *faith*, *belief*, and *trust* as all essentially the same thing (the same Greek words are used for faith and belief).²⁸¹ And it speaks of both the heart and the mind as synonymous instruments of belief. The Scriptures do not contrast “heart faith” and “head faith”, but inner faith (root) and outer actions (fruit): “Faith ... is simply *the man believing* ... In Rom. X.9, the apostle is not contrasting the *heart* with the *mind*, but with the *mouth* ; in other words, the inner with the outer man.”²⁸² Faith is what you believe on the inside, which works on the outside. Gordon H. Clark writes, “How could anyone know anything without a mind? But when [someone says] ‘also of the heart,’ [he] introduces a dualism that is utterly foreign to the Old Testament, and therefore to the New Testament also. Heart and mind are synonymous. People who assert a duality never explain what a non-mental knowledge could possibly be.”²⁸³ Illustrations of faith as sitting in a chair confuse it with evidence worked out. Horatius Bonar writes, “He opens our hand to receive the gift ; and he places the gift in our hand when thus opened by himself.”²⁸⁴ Saving faith is assent unto gracious

²⁷⁹ VanDixhoorn, 185.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 191.

²⁸¹ UBS Greek Lexicon: “**4879 πίστις**, ... faith, trust, belief; the Christian faith; conviction, good conscience (Ro 14.22, 23); perhaps body of faith, doctrine (Jd 3, 20) ...” John 3:16, “believeth” is the verb form of “faith” in the Greek. UBS Greek Lexicon: “**4877 πιστεύω**, believe (in), have faith (in) (with God or Christ as object); believe, believe in; have confidence (in someone or something), entrust (something to another) ...”

²⁸² Horatius Bonar, *God’s Way of Holiness* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1864) , 10. He also refers to faith as “an act of our mind”, 27. See also Jay E. Adams “Preaching to the Heart” in the *Trinity Review* free online. Keil and Delitzsch’s Commentary on Exodus 28:3 and “wise hearted” note, “... the heart being regarded as the birth-place of the thoughts.” C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Translated by James Martin, “The Second Book of Moses (Exodus)”, vol. 2 in *Commentary on the Old Testament: The Pentateuch: Three Volumes in One* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) , 192.

²⁸³ Gordon H. Clark, *Philippians* (Hobbs, N.M.: The Trinity Foundation, 1996), 93.

²⁸⁴ Bonar, 40.

propositions of Christ in the Gospel for yourself.²⁸⁵ A.A. Hodge points out, “Faith, in the most general sense of the word, is the assent of the mind to the truth of that of which we have not an immediate cognition”. Faith is believing new information revealed to us in contrast to “knowledge ... the perception of the truth of that of which we have an immediate cognition”.²⁸⁶ That is, we *know* what we experience directly and we *believe* what is given to us by testimony (Heb. 11:3). “Religious faith, in the most general sense of that word, is the assent of the mind to the general truths of religion ...”²⁸⁷ The Confession and Catechisms don’t deal with the *psychology* of faith, but the *act* of *saving* faith: “Faith is not a vague, mystical experience, but is believing the truth God has given us in His Word.”²⁸⁸

WCF 14:1: *The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, (a) is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; (b) and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word; (c) by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened. (d)*

(a) Heb. 10:39. (b) 2 Cor. 4:13; Eph. 1:17-19; Eph. 2:8. (c) Rom. 10:14, 17. (d) 1 Pet. 2:2; Acts 20:32; Rom. 4:11; Luke 17:5; Rom. 1:16-17.

Faith is a gracious gift, a “work of the Spirit”, found *in* you but not *of* you.²⁸⁹ This is what makes it different and saving compared to other faiths: the ability to believe on Jesus for oneself as enabled by the Spirit of Christ. It is often said that faith is not belief in a proposition, but trust in a person. But you only can trust a person based on what you know about him. Thus the WSC 86 says faith in Jesus Christ is receiving and resting upon Jesus “as he is offered to us in the gospel”. This is why reading the Bible and hearing preaching is vital to salvation and sanctification. We all can identify with the cries in the New Testament, “I believe, help thou my unbelief”, and “increase our faith”. Here we are reminded we grow in faith mainly by participating in the ordinary means of grace (See WLC 153-196). Of main importance, forgiveness of sin and eternal life are received by faith in what Jesus Christ does for you, not earning acceptance by God through what you do.

WCF 14:2: *By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein; (e) and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, (f) trembling at the*

²⁸⁵ The common three-part explanation of faith (*noticia*, *assensus*, and *fiducia*) is based on Latin, not Biblical Hebrew or Greek and is vague tautology that confuses the evidence of faith (works) with faith itself (a gift). Though the Confession’s contemporary commentary bemoans a “Papist” “naked assent”, its author only distinguishes between two aspects of saving faith as, “... not done only by an assent to God’s promises in our understanding, but also by trusting to the same in our will ...” (Dickson, 85). Augustine in *The Predestination of the Saints*: “... belief itself is nothing else than to think with assent” (*God’s Hammer* blog, “Augustine on Saving Faith”, Dec. 26, 2011); Leonard Van Horn, “Studies in the Westminster Shorter Catechism”, Q&A 3, in *The Shield and Sword* Vol. 1, No. 3 (March, 1961, in *This Day in Presbyterian History* blog, Jan. 28, 2015): “The widely accepted definition of belief is that ‘it is the assent of the mind to what is told us on competent and credible authority.’” Packer, 159: “... faith (believing trust, or trustful belief, based on testimony received as from God) ... is an object-oriented response ...”

²⁸⁶ A.A. Hodge, 202.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 203.

²⁸⁸ Spear, 77.

²⁸⁹ Sproul, vol. 2, 112.

threatenings, (g) and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. (h) But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace. (i)

(e) John 4:42; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 John 5:10; Acts 24:14. (f) Rom. 16:26. (g) Isa. 66:2. (h) Heb. 11:13; 1 Tim. 4:8. (i) John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Acts 15:11.

Yet faith is something you do. God gives faith, but He does not believe for you. *You* must believe the Gospel to save *you* from God's wrath and punishment in eternal hell. As WSC 85 and WLC 153 explain, faith in Jesus Christ is required of us (along with repentance unto life) to escape God's wrath due to us for sin. WLC 32 says that faith is a required "condition" to interest us in Jesus, although it is first met by God through His effectual calling. The emphasis has been on what God objectively does to and in us; now, "... the focus changes to our subjective response to God's saving work."²⁹⁰ So G.I. Williamson inserts these two chapters before justification in his commentary on the Confession. While faith involves acting differently in obedience to God's commands, in particular, initial saving faith is "embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come." The last part of this paragraph is most important to highlight for a good understanding of "saving faith": "The principal acts [not meritorious works, but ordained means] of saving faith are accepting [assenting to information as true], receiving [believing in the Gospel for yourself], and resting [continuing to believe to sustain you] upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace." Notice, saving faith is trusting Christ alone. Also, in WLC 73, faith doesn't save you, Jesus saves you. Faith is the receiving instrument of the salvation.

WCF 14:3: *This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; (k) may be often and many ways assailed, and weakened, but gets the victory; (l) growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, (m) who is both the author and finisher of our faith. (n)*

(k) Heb. 5:13-14; Rom. 4:19-20; Matt. 6:30; Matt. 8:10. (l) Luke 22:31-32; Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:4-5. (m) Heb. 6:11-12; Heb. 10:22; Col. 2:2. (n) Heb. 12:2.

Faith is required, but even a mustard seed will save. Saving faith is trusting God's Word to be true for you even when your feelings waver. For it is trusting Jesus to finish His work. See Pastor's sermon on Sermon Audio on Hebrews 11:1-12:13, "Faith is Not a Feeling."

Some thoughts on saving faith by Thomas Watson in his *Body of Divinity*:

"We glorify God by believing. Rom iv 20 ... Faith knows there are no impossibilities with God, and will trust him where it cannot trace him ..." (12). "... the more we believe the truth and infiniteness of God, the more holy and angelic we are in our lives" (44). "We are said to be justified through faith as an instrument in Eph ii 8, but not for faith as a cause ... Acts xiii 49. They were not elected because they believed, but they believed because they were elected" (70). "Faith entitles us to the mercy of the second covenant ..." (131). "Faith fetches all from Christ, and gives all the glory to Christ ... the condition of the covenant is faith" (156). "True justifying faith consists in three things: (i) Self-renunciation ... seeing we have no righteousness of our own ... Phil iii 9. Self-righteousness is a broken reed, which the soul dares not lean on ... by repentance a man abhors himself; by faith he goes out of himself" (215-216). "(ii) Reliance. The soul casts itself upon Jesus Christ; faith rests on Christ's person ... I John iii 23 ... (iii) Appropriation, or applying Christ to ourselves ... receiving him. John i 12" (216). "Faith is the chief work which the Spirit of God works in a man's heart" (216). "... faith sets hope to work ... faith believes its title to glory, and then hope waits for it. If faith did not feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die. Faith sets love to work ... Gal v 6 ...

²⁹⁰ Spear, 76.

Faith sets patience to work ... Heb vi I2 ... faith is the master-wheel, it sets all the other graces running ... The other graces help to sanctify, but it is faith that justifies” (217). “ ... faith justifies, as it lays hold of the object, viz. Christ’s merits ... Faith does not justify as it exercises grace ... but as it applies Christ’s merits” (217). “ ... faith is a grace that takes a man off himself, and gives all the honour to Christ and free grace ... Other graces make us like Christ, faith makes us members of Christ ... above all things labour for faith ... Eph. vi I6 ... Faith is the condition of the covenant of grace; without faith, without covenant; and without covenant, without hope. Eph ii I2” (218). “ ... faith washes the inside ... Acts xv 9. Faith makes the heart a sacristy or holy of holies ... thought it does not take away the life of sin, yet it takes away the love of sin” (219). “Faith is an obediencial grace ... Faith melts our will into God’s ... faith looking on Christ transforms a man, and turns him into his similitude. Looking on a bleeding Christ causes a soft bleeding heart; looking on a holy Christ causes sanctity of heart; looking on a humble Christ makes the soul humble ... True faith grows ... Rom i I7” (219). “We must distinguish between weakness of faith and no faith ... A weak faith may receive a strong Christ ... The promise is not made to strong faith, but to true ... A weak faith may be fruitful. Weakest things multiply most; the vine is a weak plant, but it is fruitful. Weak Christians may have strong affections. How strong is the first love, which is after the first planting of faith! ... though Christ will cut off rotten members from his body, he will not cut off weak members” (220).

Chapter 15: Repentance Unto Life

First, notice that it is not really possible to talk about faith or repentance in a particular order. They are really two sides of the same coin, or two hemispheres of the full orb of our response to God that saves us, and our continual response to God that sustains us. Williamson explains that our conversion (due to regeneration) is both repentance and faith, and adds: “ ... repentance and faith are inseparable. There cannot be one without the other ... repentance and faith accompany rather than follow one another.”²⁹¹ See Acts 20:21. The distinction seems to be that repentance is sorrow for sin and wanting to be forgiven, while faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for that forgiveness. Thomas Watson writes, “The two great graces essential to a saint in this life are faith and repentance. These are the two wings by which he flies to heaven.”²⁹²

WCF 15:1: *Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, (a) the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ. (b)*

(a) Zech. 12:10; Acts 11:18. (b) Luke 24:47; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21.

Repentance is to be preached as much as faith. R.C. Sproul writes, “If repentance is not preached, the

²⁹¹ Williamson, 97. Dickson says “faith is the cause of repentance” (88), but the Confession doesn’t say so.

²⁹² Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance* (Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth Trust, 2016), 7. Still, he goes on to ponder: “Doubtless repentance shows itself first in a Christian’s life. Yet I am apt to think that the seeds of faith are first wrought in the heart. As when a burning taper is brought into a room the light shows itself first, but the taper was before the light, so we see the fruits of repentance first, but the beginnings of faith were there before. That which inclines me to think that faith is seminally in the heart before repentance is because repentance, being a grace, must be exercised by one that is living. Now, how does the soul live but by faith? ‘The just shall live by his faith’ (*Heb. 10.38*). Therefore there must be first some seeds of faith in the heart of a penitent, otherwise it is a dead repentance and so of no value. Whether faith or repentance goes first, however, I am sure that repentance is of such importance that there is no being saved without it.” *Ibid*, 12-13.

message is a false gospel.”²⁹³ To believe in Jesus to save us from our sins, we must grieve over our sins and desire to be rescued from them. Thus, “The preaching of repentance ... means preaching the requirements and penalties of the law of God.”²⁹⁴ John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Apostles all began preaching with, “Repent”. In the Gospel era, God now commands everyone to repent (Acts. 17:30). Jesus’ main message to the churches of Asia in Revelation was to repent.

WCF 15:2: *By it, a sinner, out of the sight and sense not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God; and upon the apprehension of His mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for, and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God, (c) purposing and endeavouring to walk with Him in all the ways of His commandments. (d)*

(c) Ezek. 18:30-31; Ezek. 36:31; Isa. 30:22; Ps. 51:4; Jer. 31:18-19; Joel 2:12-13; Amos 5:15; Ps. 119:128; 2 Cor. 7:11. (d) Ps. 119:6, 59, 106; Luke 1:6; 2 Kings 23:25.

Repentance is a new attitude based on being given a new heart. One “grieves for, and hates his sins”: “... repentance involves believing something about ourselves and something about Christ ... a serious consideration of our own sin ... they will look ‘on him whom they have pierced’ [Zech. 12:10] ... As we look on Christ, the one who was pierced for our transgressions, we begin to see the full measure of our sin ... repentance contemplates our sin and the *cost* of our sin to the Saviour”²⁹⁵ More than an emotionally feeling bad, repentance according to the Greek word is a *change of mind*. It is not just *attrition* (a remorseful/regretful heart: self-reproach that seeks to escape consequences for sinning), but *contrition* (a broken/contrite heart: commitment to stop sinning): “Repenting of any vice means going in the opposite direction, to practice the virtues most directly opposed to it.”²⁹⁶ Apprehending God’s mercy in Christ, true repentance desires not to disappoint our Father, dishonor our King, nor grieve our Comforter (2 Cor. 7:11). Repentance will turn away from sin unto God, but it is not what you do, which is the fruit of repentance. Repentance is a “*purpose and endeavoring to walk with Him in all the ways of His commandments.*” It is right to question true repentance if there is no fruitful walk. But a lack of perfect walking does not mean you are not repentant.

WCF 15:3: *Although repentance be not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, (e) which is the act of God’s free grace in Christ; (f) yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it. (g)*

(e) Ezek. 36:31-32; Ezek. 16:61-63. (f) Hos. 14:2, 4; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7. (g) Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30-31.

Against the penance of the Catholic Church, repentance is not what pardons you: “As long as we think that God owes us something, our repentance is not genuine.”²⁹⁷ Against Arminianism’s “evangelical repentance”, repentance comes *after* regeneration and is thus not of man. God calls you to repent, but it *follows* and flows from His initial work of regeneration in you. Yet, if you are not repentant, you should not expect to be pardoned for sin. Because faith and repentance always

²⁹³ Sproul, vol. 2, 136. Dickson, 87: “... the whole sum of the gospel is placed in preaching faith and repentance ...”

²⁹⁴ Spear, 81.

²⁹⁵ Van Dixhoorn, 194.

²⁹⁶ Packer, 163.

²⁹⁷ Sproul, vol. 2, 140.

accompany regeneration produced by an effectual calling, “repentance is a necessary consequence of regeneration.”²⁹⁸ It is the instrument by which God initiates and continues your conversion.

WCF 15:4: *As there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation, (h) so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent. (i)*

(h)Rom. 6:23; Rom. 5:12; Matt. 12:36. (i)Isa. 55:7; Rom. 8:1; Isa. 1:16, 18.

A very pastoral comment. No one should say, “God can’t forgive me, you don’t know what I’ve done.” There is no sin of which you cannot repent. God always forgives. Do not stay away from God for any sin, however great. God’s grace is always greater, and He can always restore you.

WCF 15:5: *Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man’s duty to endeavour to repent of his particular sins, particularly. (k)*

(k)Ps. 19:13; Luke 19:8; 1 Tim. 1:13,15.

To grow in grace and sanctification, you must repent of your “particular sins, particularly.” Don’t just confess you are a sinner, confess your specific sins; the first saves, the latter sanctifies. See David as our example: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Ps. 139:23-24). Consider seeking an accountability partner for mutual confession and prayer. Van Dixhoorn warns, “Those who piously content themselves with general confession of their sinfulness often prove to be the most stubborn sinners ... particular repentance is evidenced in turning away.”²⁹⁹

WCF 15:6: *As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof; (l) upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy: (m) so, he that scandalizeth his brother, or the Church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession, and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended, (n) who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him. (o)*

(l)Ps. 51:4-5, 7, 9, 14; Ps. 32:5-6. (m)Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9. (n)James 5:16; Luke 17:3-4; Josh. 7:19; Ps. 51. (o)2 Cor. 2:8.

“Genuine repentance is shown by appropriate restitution.”³⁰⁰ Restitution is the fruit of true repentance (See Zacchaeus, Lk. 19). Private confession to God for private sins is expected. But sin against one another also should be repented of to those we have offended. Just as we sorrow for grieving the Spirit, so we should sorrow for grieving our brethren. When we sin, we should confess privately to those we offended. When our sins are more public, there should be some kind of public confession requesting forgiveness and committing to do better. Christianity is not a private religion. It is a family affair. Having peace with God, we ought to “be willing” to make peace with others.

R.C Sproul shares an important insight on repentance with Psalm 51 in view:

A man once offered me a job if I would leave the ministry and go to work with him. The man had a very lucrative psychiatric practice, and his reason for asking me to come to work

²⁹⁸ Clark, *WPB*, 65.

²⁹⁹ Van Dixhoorn, 200-201. We are told to confess sins to our elders and one another for health (Js. 5:14-16).

³⁰⁰ Ward, 103.

for him was, as he said, “that 98 percent of my patients don’t need a psychiatrist. What they need is a priest. The number-one problem I have to deal with in my practice is unresolved guilt. I can give them medicine to quiet their conscience, but that often doesn’t really solve the problem. They need a priest.” Though I did not take the job, I am well aware that we are a guilt-ridden people who lack a release valve for our pent-up guilt.”³⁰¹

Some closing thoughts on repentance unto life by Thomas Watson, in his book, *The Doctrine of Repentance*:

“Repentance is never out of season; it is of as frequent use as the artificer’s tool or the soldier’s weapon ... Repentance is purgative; fear not the working of this pill. Smite your soul, said Chrysostom, smite it; it will escape death by that stroke ... We may clearly see the Spirit of God moving in the waters of repentance, which though troubled, are yet pure ... Repentance is the cherisher of piety, the procurer of mercy” (7). “Either sin must drown or the soul burn ... Besides our own personal miscarriages, the deplorable condition of the land calls for a contribution of tears” (8). “... that some sin may be shot to death, shall be the ardent prayer of him who is The well-wisher of your soul’s happiness ...” (9). Repentance is wrought “I. *Partly by the word* ... 2. *By the Spirit* ... When the Spirit touches a heart it dissolves with tears ... O pray that the dew may fall with the manna, that the Spirit may go along with the word” (14). “Repentance is a grace of God’s Spirit whereby a sinner is inwardly humbled and visibly reformed ... repentance is a spiritual medicine made up of six special ingredients: 1. Sight of sin 2. Sorrow for sin 3. Confession of sin 4. Shame for sin 5. Hatred for sin 6. Turning from sin” (18). “Before a man can come to Christ he must first come to himself [*Luke 15.17; 1 Kings 8.47*] ... the first thing in a penitent is illumination ...” (18). “Sin must first be seen before it can be wept for” (19). “The Hebrew word ‘to be sorrowful’ signifies ‘to have the soul, as it were, crucified’ ... *Zech 12.10* ... as if they did feel the nails of the cross sticking in their sides” (19). Re: *Luke 7.38*, “The sorrow of her heart ran out at her eye” (19-20). “This sorrow for sin is not superficial: it is a holy agony. It is called in scripture a breaking of the heart ... *Ps. 51.17* ... a rending of the heart ... *Joel 2.13* ... The expressions of smiting on the thigh (*Jer. 31.19*), beating on the breast (*Luke 18:13*), putting on of sackcloth (*Isa. 22.12*), plucking off the hair (*Ezra 9.3*), all these are but outward signs of inward sorrow. This sorrow is: (1) To make Christ precious ... (2) To drive out sin ... (3) To make way for solid comfort ...” (20). “The apostle speaks of sorrowing ‘after a godly manner’ (*2 Cor. 7.9*) ... There are six qualifications of it: 1. *True godly sorrow is inward* ... of the heart [and] for heart-sins ... 2. *Godly sorrow is ingenuous* [innocent and unsuspecting] It is sorrow for the offense rather than for the punishment ... 3. *Godly sorrow is fiducial* [Trustful] It is intermixed with faith ... Some have faces so swollen with worldly grief that they can hardly look out of their eyes. That weeping is not good which blinds the eye of faith. If there are not some dawnings of faith in the soul, it is not the sorrow of humiliation but of despair. 4. *Godly sorrow is a great sorrow* ... We are to find as much bitterness in weeping for sin as ever we found sweetness in committing it ... Our sorrow for sin must be such as makes us willing to let go of those sins ... 5. *Godly sorrow in some cases is joined with restitution* ... *Num. 5.7* ... *Luke 19.8* ... 6. *Godly sorrow is abiding* ... True sorrow must be habitual” (21-25). “There is a two-fold sorrow: firstly, a rational sorrow ... secondly, there is a sensitive sorrow ... expressed by many tears. The first of these is to be found in every child of God, but the second ... all have not. Yet it is very commendable to see a weeping penitent” (26). “A repenting frame is a sacramental frame. A broken

³⁰¹ Sproul, vol. 2, 147. Earlier, he writes: “The church seems to have decided that the most significant way to minister to people is to help them increase their self-esteem”, 140. Rather, Ps. 51 and Isa. 6 offer a better ministry model. See Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel*: he shares about his internship experience (with an unbelieving medical mentor) observing written off “comatosed” patients revived, “healed”, and released when confronted to repent of guilt.

heart and a broken Christ do well agree. The more bitterness we taste in sin, the more sweetness we shall taste in Christ” (27). “When the soul is going out of the body, it should swim to heaven in a sea of tears” (28). “Confession is self-accusing ... *2 Sam. 24.17* ... And the truth is that by this self-accusing we prevent Satan’s accusing ... *I Cor. II.31* ...” (28-29). “The heart must deeply resent it ... true confession leaves heart-wounding impressions on a man ... *Ps. 38.4* ... It is one thing to confess sin and another thing to feel sin ... The hypocrite confesses sin but loves it ...” (29). “*We must confess our sins with a resolution not to act them over again* ... Some run from the confessing of sin to the committing of sin ...” (31). “Origin calls confession the vomit of the soul whereby the conscience is eased of that burden which did lie upon it [see *Ps. 32:3-5* and also a warning in *Prov. 26:11*]” (32). “Many had rather have their sins covered than cured ... They who will not confess their sin as David did, that they may be pardoned, shall confess their sin as Achan did, that they may be stoned ... *Prov. 28.13* ... (32). “A gracious soul labours to make the worst of his sins, but hypocrites make the best of them ... excuses rather than confessions ... *I Sam. 15.24* ... *Gen. 3.12* ...” (33). “When men commit sin they are the devil’s servants; when they plead for [defend] it they are the devil’s attorneys, and he will give them a fee” (34). “... confession of sin shuts the mouth of hell and opens the gate of paradise ... Holy confession gives glory to God ... Confession is a means to humble the soul ... Confession gives vent to a troubled heart. When guilt lies boiling in the conscience, confession gives ease. It is like the lancing of an abscess which gives ease to the patient ... Confession purges out sin ... Confession of sin endears Christ to the soul ... *Rom. 7.25* ... Confession of sin makes way for pardon ... *I John 1.9* ...” (34-35). “... *Ezek. 43.10* ... Blushing is the colour of virtue ... Repentance causes a holy bashfulness ... We are guilty of high treason against the Crown of heaven. This may cause a holy modesty and blushing ...” (39). “O horrid ingratitude! Will not this dye our faces a deep scarlet?” (40). “Did our sins put Christ to shame, and shall they not put us to shame? Did he wear the purple, and shall not our cheeks wear crimson?” (40-41). “*Many sins which we commit are by the special instigation of the devil* ... May not this make us ashamed to think that many of our sins are committed in copulation with the old serpent?” (41). “Is not he a fool who will believe a temptation before a promise?” (42) ... *Zeph. 3.5* It is a great shame not to be ashamed ... *Jer. 6.15* ... The devil has stolen shame from men ... There is no creature capable of shame but man. The brute beasts are capable of fear and pain, but not of shame. Those who cannot blush for sin do too much resemble the beasts.” (43). “Let us show our penitence by a modest blushing ... *Ezra 9.6* ... O let us take holy shame to ourselves for sin. Be assured, the more we are ashamed of sin now the less we shall be ashamed at Christ’s coming ... so without shame; therefore they are bid to lift up their heads (*Luke 21.28*) ... (44). “A true penitent is a sin-loather. If a man loathe that which makes his stomach sick, much more will he loathe that which makes his conscience sick ... Christ is never loved till sin be loathed. Heaven is never longed for till sin be loathed ... We are never more precious in God’s eyes than when we are lepers in our own ... Sound repentance begins in the love of God and ends in the hatred of sin” (45). “Sin leaves a stain upon the soul. A regenerate person abhors sin not only for the curse but for the contagion. He hates this serpent not only for its sting but for its poison. He hates sin not only *for* hell, but *as* hell” (47). “... weeping and turning are put together (*Joel 2.12*) ... Dying to sin is the life of repentance” g(52).

Assigned Readings for February 23, 2022: Of Good Works, Perseverance, and Assurance

- WCF chapters 16-18 and corresponding Scriptures
- WLC 79-86 and corresponding Scriptures
- WSC 36-38 and corresponding Scriptures

Suggested Readings:

- *Faith and Saving Faith*, in *What is Faith?*, Gordon H. Clark
- “What is Faith”, John Robbins: <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/PDF/029a-WhatIsFaith.pdf>

- *What is Faith?*, J. Gresham Machen
- “Preaching to the Heart”, Jay E. Adams, in *Trinity Review* September/October 1984.
- Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance* (Puritan Paperbacks)
- Don Kistler, *The Puritans on Conversion*