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## I.—Literary.

### REPENTANCE AND ORIGINAL SIN.

The question is sometimes asked whether we must repent of original sin. It is sometimes asked triumphantly by controversialists who fancy that they disprove by it the reality of "original sin." The Christian heart, they argue, turns in instinctive repentance away from all sin: it is absurd, however, to talk of repenting of "original sin": the only sin that is recognizable as such, therefore, under the test of repentance, is our actual transgression. It is also, however, sometimes asked anxiously by earnest Christians, eager to perform their whole duty before the Lord. All sin, they reason, must be repented of that it may be forgiven: must I not then repent of the sin of our first father, which has been imputed to me, just as really and just as poignantly as I repent of my own actual transgressions, if I am to hope for forgiveness and reception into life? If not, am I not practically assuming the frivolous attitude of the young French woman, who, when asked by her Confessor, "What must we do to repent unto life," replied archly: "We must first of all sin, my Father?"

In approaching a question like this we must obviously begin by making sure that we are not using our terms confusedly. What do we mean by "Repentance?" And what do we mean by "Original Sin?" Clearly, if we use these terms in shifting senses we shall never arrive at a stable solution of the problem propounded. If Repentance means for

us simple sorrow, however sharp, our conclusion may be one thing: if it means for us amendment of life, our conclusion may be quite a different thing. If Original Sin means for us Adam's personal sin made ours by an external act of imputation, our conclusion may be one thing; if it means for us our own inborn depravity, common to us and the whole race of man, our conclusion may be a very different thing. Let us agree at the outset, therefore, that the terms shall be understood in their broadest and fullest sense. By Repentance we are to mean, not merely sorrow for and hatred of sin, but also the inward turning away from it to God, with full purpose of new obedience. By Original Sin we are to mean not merely adherent but also inherent sin, not merely the sinful act of Adam imputed to us, but also the sinful state of our own souls conveyed to us by the just judgment of God.

When so understood, it would seem sufficiently clear that we must "repent of original sin." The corruption that is derived by us from our first parents comes to us, indeed, as penalty; but it abides in us as sin, and must be looked upon as sin both by God and by the enlightened conscience itself. Surely the All-Holy God cannot look upon depravity without abhorrence; the All-Just God cannot look upon it without righteous indignation. To suppose otherwise would be to suppose that what is in its very nature the direct contradictory of His holiness, is either not recognized by Him as such, or, being so recognized, does not produce within Him the appropriate emotions. As long as God is God He will not be able to endure the sight of depravity without both abhorrence and indignation. It is idle, therefore, to speak of our innate depravity as "uncondemnable vitiosity." Whatever is vicious is by that very token condemnable and in the sight of God already condemned. In proportion then, as the Christian's conscience is quickened by the Holy Spirit, and instructed by the Word to estimate things from the standpoint of God, in that proportion will he both abhor and condemn himself for the depravity that dwells within him. And this is the reason of the poignancy of self-arraignment which characterizes Paul's language in the seventh chapter of Romans, and which leads some careless

readers to doubt whether it is the fit expression of the consciousness of a regenerated man. Only the regenerate man, however, could experience such sharpness of agony over his indwelling sin. Every regenerated man will, like Paul, so soon as his eyes are opened, feel the deepest contrition for his indwelling sin, and form the stoutest purpose to oppose and overcome it. What he *does* will seem black enough in his illuminated eyes; what he *is* will seem blacker still. And the very core of his repentance will be his firm determination not only to *do* better but to *be* better. And thus it appears, that so far from its being impossible to repent of original sin, repentance, considered in its normative sense,—not as an act of turning away from this sin or that sin, but of turning from sin as such to God—is fundamentally just repentance of “Original Sin.” Until we repent of original sin, we have not, properly speaking, repented in the Christian sense at all. For it is characteristic of heathen thought to look upon sin atomistically as only so many acts of sin, and at repentance also, therefore, atomistically as only so many acts of turning away from sinning; the Christian conception probes deeper and finds behind the acts of sin the sinful nature and behind the specific acts of repentance for sins the great normative act of repentance for this sinful nature. He only, then, has really repented who has perceived and felt the filthiness and odiousness of his depraved nature and has turned from it to God with a full purpose of being hereafter more conformed to His image as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.

But, it may be said, we can at least, then, not be expected to repent of “imputed sin.” The language again is ambiguous. Our own actual transgressions are “imputed to us,” “counted as ours,” “counted against us,” just as truly as is Adam’s first act of transgression; and so is our own inward depravity. But if what is meant is, that we cannot be expected to repent of Adam’s act of sin, the guilt of which is imputed to us as the judicial ground of the infliction upon us of the penalty threatened to him,—this is true enough. It is not the personal ill-desert of Adam’s sin that is transferred to us by “imputation,” but only the law-relation to it; not the *reatus culpæ* but only the *rectus*

*poenæ*. And though the latter may and does supply a ground for grief and sorrow and regret on our part, it is only the former that can lay a foundation for a turning away from sin with a set purpose after a changed life, to be lived in the strength of God.

Nevertheless, it is perhaps not always sufficiently considered how deeply we may—how deeply sensitive souls do—enter by sympathetic identification into “Original Sin” even in this purely imputative sense, so as to quicken within us something which very closely simulates repentance. “Human nature,” it has been strikingly said, “is so constituted as to *implicate* us not only in our own personal moral acts, but also in the moral acts of each other; and in consequence thereof, conscience in its higher exercises extends beyond the sphere of our individual conduct and is sympathetically affected by the conduct of others; filling us with shame and grief at the moral degradation of those we love, and inspiring us with joy and satisfaction when they are seen to excell in virtue.”\* The author of this remark presses it beyond all bounds, and would fain replace with this sympathetic identification the really vicarious substitution of Christ for His people. Yet the remark itself is obviously true and has its proper application. A father’s heart is broken by the crime of his son; and a son is degraded by a father’s disgrace. A mother enters, often more fully than the culprit herself, into a daughter’s shame. We feel even in some sense participants in the blameworthiness of those with whom we are closely connected. A sensitive soul, implicated with mankind as sinful, may feel thus as man, and so enter sympathetically into the guilt of the race. We may be sure, though this was not all, nor yet the core, of our Lord’s identification with His people, yet that His pure and sensitive soul did, by this way of sympathetic identification also, enter into the sinfulness of the race He had come to redeem; and that in this was hidden one source of His sufferings for us. Doubtless others, also, His followers, partakers of His spirit, may have like him so borne in their own souls the sorrow of sin—of sin conceived of as

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\*Philosophy of Evangelicalism, p. 232.

His sin, guilt before God, and not as personal corruption.

Let this sorrow for sin, however, reach its fullest height and still it falls short of "Repentance." It may produce shame; it may reach in its degree even to agony; it may be properly designated as grief, sorrow for sin, Godly sorrow for sin. It may quicken to a perception of our own share in any sin more particularly in question:—it may arouse a father to probe his heart to the discovery of his own failure in training the son who has disgraced him; it may stir up the son to perceive what effect his own failure in duty and obedience may have had in deteriorating his father's character. It may greatly increase the poignancy of our contrition as we repent for such share as we may have had in other's transgressions. But the essential element of true "Repentance"—properly and precisely so-called—will necessarily be lacking. There can be no turning away from sin to God except in the case of those in whom the sin dwells as actual sin. Every element of repentance except this essential element may thus be present in what we may somewhat improperly call this "sodalistic repentance;" but where this element is absent, there "repentance", strictly so-called, cannot be present.

We conclude, therefore, that the actual presence of sin in its completeness is requisite for the performance of the act of repentance in its completeness. The element of guilt (liability to punishment) may be present and repentance be impossible in its completeness; we may in that case feel grief, sorrow and regret, but not experience reformation. Only when not only liability to punishment but personal demerit is present, can repentance in its full sense enter in. Hence it follows that our Blessed Lord could not repent in this full and precise sense of the word: He did nothing and He has nothing for which He could feel regret: nor did He share our sin in the sense of inner corruption or personal ill-desert. He was as incapable of repentance as of the sinfulness from which it is the recoil. But of Him alone of those who have as men trodden this earth, can it be said that there was no place in Him for repentance. The infant of days has that within him which is offensive to God's sight and will be the ground of abhorrence to himself so

soon as the eyes of his spirit are opened that they may truly see his state; and so soon as he is capable, by reason of age, of mental action, so soon is repentance within his duty and, by God's grace, may be within his power.

BENJ. B. WARFIELD.

Princeton.

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### PULPIT BEARING.

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E. M. BOOTH, A. M., Instructor in Elocution, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill.

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Paul's exhortation to the Ephesian Christians to "walk worthy" of their vocation, while ordinarily viewed as an injunction to correct moral conduct, is equally just as a requirement of art.

In fact, the expression derives its whole force from the implied correspondence between a man's outward actions and his inward purpose. It assumes that every calling has a walk, the basis of bearing and of manners, which is especially appropriate to it, which is "worthy."

It is only when the appearance is at variance with the reality that the walk is thought to be unworthy.

In such cases it is felt that the manner is either an affectation or an hypocrisy. Whether it is, in truth, the one or the other, depends upon the purpose which prompts it. An affectation has in it, ordinarily, the purpose to please. The purpose of hypocrisy is to deceive. The fact that it is not a manifestation of the actual state of the individual is what stamps it in any case as unworthy. Every one instinctively feels with St. Paul that a man's bearing, like his clothing, should be a fitting suit to his character and to his calling.

What, then, shall be said of the preacher's bearing in the pulpit? Do pulpit manners come within St. Paul's injunction? Is there any standard by which to measure the action of the sacred orator? Does the average pulpit measure up to its possibilities in this respect or even up to the recognized criteria of expressive action?